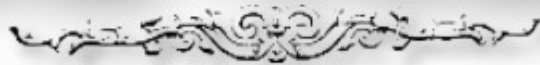


THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RAPTURE



**A Bible Believer's Examination
of the Rapture from the
Word of God**

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NOTE: This book is available in [Kindle Format](#).

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PREFACE

There are many books on the Rapture. On both sides of the issue - defending the Rapture and attacking the Rapture - why write another book? Many times we need to hear and read something several times and several ways to grasp the truth. The apostle Peter challenges us by "stirring you up" by "way of remembrance".

2 Peter 1:13

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, **to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;**

2 Peter 3:1

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; **in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:**

The application of "stir you up" is likened to the "stirring" or "agitation" of a washing machine, as it stirs and agitates to clean the wash. My prayer is this study of the Rapture will also "stir you up" by way of remembrance about the Rapture. Maybe something will "stir you up" to search the truth of the Word of God. I've read scores of books on the Rapture, both for and against, and many times, something stirred in me to study and dig deeper. Much of what's here is not new, but hopefully something will "stir you up" to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)

Forty years ago, as a new Christian, a friend gave me a book titled *Know What You Believe* by Paul E. Little. It was a helpful little book that introduced new Christians to the "milk" of the Word of God. It helped teach basic doctrine in my young Christian life. It is important to know "WHAT you believe". Paul Little also wrote another little book along the same idea titled, *Know WHY You Believe*. This valuable little book provided the insight to not only know WHAT you believe, but just as important – **know WHY you believe**. That little book provided a foundation for my Christian study for over forty years. It brings to mind, the admonition of the Word of God in 1 Peter 3:15 to "**be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you**".

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: **and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

We MUST know WHY we believe. As a Bible-believer, we MUST "be ready to give an answer to everyone that asked for a reason of the hope that is in you". Too many Christians "believe WHAT they believe" simply because the preacher says so or that's what their church teaches; or that's what mommy believes. When "asked for a reason of the hope" – they stumble and bumble. *They do not KNOW WHY they believe WHAT they believe*. Unfortunately, that is the case with many Christians that *blindly* believe the Rapture. When asked to "give an answer for the reason of the hope" of the Rapture in the Word of God, they become deaf and dumb.

As a young Bible believing Christian 40 years ago my first contact with the "rapture" was *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey. It became a world-wide best seller that started a prophecy craze. With every "sign" and "sound" I just KNEW the "rapture" was happening! Each passing "raptureless" day, my faith in the rapture waned. As I battled the daily "carrot and stick" of this life, the "sights and sounds" of the rapture grew deaf and dim. It didn't take long in my Christian walk that the "Rapture" became the "Rupture". The "hope" of the rapture was quickly "blowing in the wind." I began to wonder if the rapture was just a wishful-pipe-dream built on sinking sand.

Searching for the Truth about the Rapture, I read several books on the Rapture, both for and against. One author wrote this and another author wrote just the opposite – and the problem – **they ALL sounded right!** I felt like the “confused folks in Act 19:32, **“Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.”** Like those poor folks, I didn’t know if I was coming or going!

Remembering the “Know WHY You Believe” admonition from Paul E. Little, I began a serious Bible study to KNOW WHY and WHY I believed about the Rapture, And more important, I determined to get my answer ONLY from a King James Bible and the Holy Spirit (...*he will guide you into all truth...* John 16:13). No commentators or opinions welcome. It was me, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit taking this Rapture journey. This study is my personal journey and study from the Word of God which “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

GOD’S PROPHETIC PLAN

In order to examine the rapture we must first understand God’s prophetic plan from the Word of God. So please give a few minutes to lay down the prophetic foundation for the rapture. Not knowing the prophetic literacy of my readers, it is important that we all understand the basic prophecy foundations in the Word of God. If you are familiar with the following “milk”, please be patient and receive it as a friendly “way of remembrance” (2 Peter 3:1).

The Second Coming of Christ...

The one theme running throughout the Word of God is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back. The Word of God over and over, prophesies and promises the Second Coming of Christ. The Last Promise in the scriptures is a promise from the Lord that He is coming back quickly “Surely I come quickly” (Revelation 22:20). And the Last Prayer in the Bible follows, which is an “Amen” prayer from John for the Second Coming; “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

From Genesis to Revelation, the Second Coming of Christ is promised and prophesied. Most of the Old Testament prophets (Song of Solomon-Malachi) prophesy the Judgment of God and the Second Coming of Christ. The Second Coming of Christ is the most prevalent topic in the Word of God. In fact, for every one verse on the First Coming of Christ dying on Calvary, there are at least eight verses on His Second Coming.

It is claimed that one out of every thirty verses in the Bible mentions this doctrine [The Second Coming]; to every one mention of the first coming, the second coming is mentioned eight times; 318 references to it are made in 216 chapters; whole books (1 and 2 Thess.) and chapters (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) are devoted to it. **It is the theme of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus Christ bore constant testimony to His coming again (John 14:3; Matt. 24 and 25; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 21:22).** (William Evans. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, p. 236)

If Jesus Christ does not return physically and literally to this earth to set up His kingdom, Christianity turn out to be the greatest hoax in history. His return is so intimately tied to the most central doctrine of the Bible and the church that the validity of Christianity totally depends upon it.

One of the most authenticated facts of ancient history is the first coming of Jesus Christ. Even today every church and letter is dated in the year of our Lord. . . Today no scholar of academic substance denies that Jesus lived almost two thousand years ago. And we find eight times as many prophecies in the Bible relating to His Second Coming as to His first. **Thus the Second Advent of our Lord is eight times as certain as His first coming which can be verified as historical fact.**

(Tim Lahaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 85, 86)

Very few born-again, Christians deny the second Coming of Jesus Christ. There may be (and there are) disagreements on some of the details and timelines concerning the Second Coming of Christ, but anyone faintly familiar with the Bible knows Jesus is coming back.

M.R. DeHaan in his book, *Studies in Revelation*, gives the following Biblical perspective and preeminence of the Second Coming of Christ:

The surest thing in all the world is the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ... Yes, the strongest certainty in all the world is the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ... Yes, Jesus Christ is coming again. Though long delayed and scoffed at by infidels, ‘the day of the Lord will come.’ All true believers believe in the second coming of Christ. One cannot believe the Bible without believing in His second advent. **Without the second coming of Christ the Bible is a book of fables, God becomes a liar, Jesus Christ an imposter**

(M.R. DeHaan, *Studies in Revelation*, pp. 45-46)

The following verses are just a few, among thousands, proclaiming the Second Coming of Christ.

Matthew 24:3

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? **and what shall be the sign of thy coming**, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:27

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; **so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**

Matthew 24:30

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

Matthew 24:37

But as the days of Noe were, **so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**

John 14:1-3

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Acts 1:9-11

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

1 Corinthians 1:7

So that ye come behind in no gift; **waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

1 Thessalonians 1:10

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord **Jesus Christ at his coming?**

1 Thessalonians 3:13

To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**

1 Thessalonians 5:23

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless **unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

James 5:8

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: **for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**

Yes, dear reader, Jesus Christ is coming again!

Most Christians also acknowledge there is a seven-year period called the Tribulation or Great Tribulation. It will be a time of death and destruction. It will be the most catastrophic and destructive time in the history of the world. It will culminate in the wrath and judgment of a Holy God upon this earth. It is found throughout the Old Testament prophets. The Great Tribulation is described in detail in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and other places. It is the subject of chapters 6-19 of the Book of Revelation.

The following verses from the Word of God reveal some of the horror of the tribulation,

The Lord Jesus describes "great tribulation" in Matthew 24:21-22

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

In Revelation 6:8 says, the antichrist will kill "over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death," Revelation 6:8

In Revelation chapter eight the following events take place during the tribulation:

A third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up: (vs 7)

A third part of the sea became blood; (vs 8)

A third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. (vs 9)

A third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. (vs 11)

A third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. (vs 12)

During the Tribulation, men will hide in the mountains from the wrath of God:

Revelation 6:15-17

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, **Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The Great Tribulation will be so terrible and frightening, "men will seek death, and desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Revelation 9:6

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

Tim LaHaye describes the horror of the Tribulation:

Take the horror of every war since time began, throw in every natural disaster in recorded history, and cast off all restraints so that the unspeakable cruelty and hatred and injustice of man toward his fellow men can fully mature-then compress it all into a period of seven years. **Even if you could imagine such a thing, it wouldn't approach the mind-boggling terror and turmoil of the Tribulation.**

(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 56)

Oh, what a day of judgment is coming! Oh my friend, if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, please stop this very moment and as the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. Don't put it off long enough to even read the rest of this article. The rapture could happen at any time, please don't be left behind to suffer the great tribulation!

The Second Coming of Christ and The Tribulation...

In Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus is asked by his disciples, "what shall be the sign of thy coming". The Lord describes some of the "signs" of His coming and the tribulation. The Lord says in verse 21, "For then shall be **GREAT TRIBULATION**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And Jesus Christ says in verses 29-30, "**Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days...**" will be the Coming of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:29-20

29 **Immediately after the tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:** and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son of man coming** in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Revelation chapters 6-18, describe the horrible and frightening details of the Great Tribulation period. And as the Lord says in Matthew 24 29 **"Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days..."** AFTER the Tribulation of Revelation chapters 6-18, Revelation 19 is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! Hallelujah! **The Word of God is crystal clear - Jesus Christ is coming back AFTER the Great Tribulation.**

Revelation 19:1, 11--21

1 **And after these things [the tribulation]** I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

...

11 **And I saw heaven opened**, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God. [see John 1:1, 1 John 5:7]**

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

To summarize our study so far, based on the Word of God, we know for CERTAIN...

1. Jesus Christ is coming again.
2. There is coming on this earth a seven-year period call the "great tribulation". A time of the wrath of God, that will be the worse death, destruction and terror the world will ever know.
3. Based on Matthew 24:29-30 and Revelation 19, (and other verses) Jesus Christ is coming back AFTER the Great Tribulation.

Nearly every born-again, Bible-believing, Christian, so far would agree with our study.

WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

The rapture is a "catching up" into heaven of born-again Christians on this earth, BEFORE the seven year tribulation period.

Immediately, one of the first and loudest objections to the "rapture" is *"Hey, the word 'rapture' is not even in the Bible! the 'rapture' must not even be in the Bible!"* Of course, just because a "word" we use to describe a "teaching" or "doctrine" isn't in the Bible doesn't mean the "teaching" is not there. For instance the "words" – "trinity, missionary, millennium" are not in the Bible. But everyone knows these are sound Bible doctrines and teachings. In fact, the "word" "bible" is not even in the "Bible"! Bible is a transliteration of the Greek word "Biblos" for the word "book".

Where did the word "rapture" come from? It came from 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The Greek word for "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is harpazo, and it means "to seize" to "catch up" or "take by force".

harpazō (*har-pad'-zo*)

"to *seize* (in various applications): - catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).

(*Strong's Bible Concordance*. 1 Thessalonians 4:17. "caught up")

Ryrie's Basic Theology explains our adaptation of the word "rapture":

Our modern understanding of rapture appears to have little or no connection with the eschatological event. **However, the word is properly used of that event. Rapture is a state or experience of being carried away.** The English word comes from a Latin word, rapio, which means to seize or snatch in relation to an ecstasy of spirit or the actual removal from one place to another. In other words, it means to be carried away in spirit or in body. **The Rapture of the church means the carrying away of the church from earth to heaven.**

The Greek word from this term 'rapture' is derived appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, translated 'caught up.' The Latin translation of this verse used the word rapturo. The Greek word it translates is harpazo, which means to snatch or take away. Elsewhere it is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea (Acts 8:39) and to describe Paul's experience of being caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-4). **Thus there can be no doubt that the word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to indicate the actual removal of people from earth to heaven.**

(Charles, Ryrie, *Ryrie's Basic Theology*)

The word "rapture" is actually a beautiful and perfect definition of the "catching up" ... "to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The word "rapture" has two distinct meanings: 1) Caught up 2) ecstasy, extreme joy or pleasure,

RAP'TURE, n. [L. raptus, rapio.]

1. Caught up. A seizing by violence.

2. Transport; ecstasy; violence of a pleasing passion; extreme joy or pleasure.

When the Lord "catches up" His children, it will indeed be "ecstasy, extreme joy or pleasure"!

The blind hymn writer Fanny Crosby "saw" the "rapture". Even though dear Fanny was physically blind, the Lord opened her "spiritual" eyes, and she "saw" some wonderful things! No wonder she wrote over 9,000 beautiful hymns! (I wrote right, over 9,000 hymns!)

In her hymn, "Blessed Assurance", the second verse says:

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above,
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

Amazing what a beautiful blind lady praising her Lord can see!

So, what is the "rapture"?

It is a "catching up" of born-again, blood-washed, Christians "to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord".

WHERE IS THE RAPTURE?

The Scriptural Proof for the Rapture...

There are four "main" scriptures *specifically* describing the rapture. There are many scriptures referencing the rapture effect (which we will study later), but four scriptures specifically describe and detail the "event" we call the rapture. There is no other honest reading of the following verses than the "rapture" or "catching up" of God's children.

1. The Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:

The clearest description of the rapture is 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18:

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

- 17 **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Let's examine 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18...

1 Thessalonians 4:15

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

When the Bible here speaks of "asleep" it is not talking about "soul sleep" as some falsely teach, but the "sleep" of the body. When a born-again, child of God dies, their body goes into the ground and "sleeps" "waiting for the adoption, to the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23)

The Christian's body goes into the grave, "asleep or resting" "waiting for the redemption of their body", but their soul immediately "departs" to be with the Lord. When Rachel died while giving birth to her son Benjamin, the Bible says in Genesis 35:18, "And it came to pass, **as her soul was in departing, (for she died)** that she called his name Benoni: his father called him Benjamin."

The Lord Jesus emphasizes several times in scriptures the body "sleeps" at death.

There is the familiar story of "Talitha cumi", found in Mark 5 and Luke 8. Jesus Christ comes to the house of the "dead" year-old girl, and says in Luke 8:52, "Weep not; she is not dead, **but sleepeth**". And the next verse (Luke 8:53) says they laughed him to scorn, **knowing that she was dead**". In Luke 8:54-55, the scriptures read, "And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. **And her spirit came again**, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat." Notice, the words "her spirit came again". **Her spirit had left her dead body**. The body was indeed sleeping, but her spirit and soul had left her body.

Luke 8:49-55

While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, **Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth**.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, **knowing that she was dead**.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 **And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway**: and he commanded to give her meat.

In another example of the body "sleeping" in death is Lazarus in John 11. In verse 11, The Lord Jesus says, "... **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth**; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples said, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall well." In verses 13-14, the Bible reads, "**Howbeit Jesus spake of his death**: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead**."

John 11:11-14

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth**; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, **Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well**.

13 **Howbeit Jesus spake of his death**: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead**.

When Stephen was stoned to death in Acts 7, Stephen says, "...**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit**" **because his spirit was about to leave his body**. The next verse says, "... he fell asleep". His body fell "asleep", but the Lord Jesus "received" his spirit.

Acts 7:59-60

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, **Lord Jesus, receive my spirit**.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, **he fell asleep**.

Clearly, the Bible does not teach "soul sleep". When a Christian dies his spirit and soul go immediately to be with the Lord – in heaven. His dead body goes "asleep" into the grave awaiting the new, glorified body.

The apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:8, when we leave this body we are with the Lord “... **to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**”. He also writes, in Philippians 1:23-24 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, **have the desire to depart, and to be with Christ**; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless **to abide in the flesh** is more needful for you.”

There's the dying thief on the cross in Luke 23:42, “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise**”. So the body “sleeps” but the soul and spirit go immediately to be with the Lord.

Back to the 1 Thessalonians 4 and the rapture:

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Jesus Christ, himself, descends from heaven with a shout - to call His children home. And the “dead in Christ” shall rise first. These are the “asleep” bodies of Christians (dead IN CHRIST) in the graves that “shall arise first.” At the rapture “souls” of the dead in Christ will come with Christ from heaven (where they are now), and their “asleep” bodies will be raised a new, glorified, celestial body that will join their soul “in the air”.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the clearest verse in the scriptures for the rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Verse 17 refers to the Christians that are alive on this earth when the “Lord descends from heaven with a shout” they **be “caught up” (rapture) together with them [the dead in Christ] in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” What a wonderful promise from the Lord! Notice, the next verse, 18 **“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” What a COMFORT it is to know the Lord Jesus is coming back to “rapture” His children. Maybe it's today! No matter how bad our circumstances may be, as a child of God, we can always say “Maybe the Lord will come and take us home today!” And praise the Lord, one of these days, He will! No wonder John says in Revelation 22:20, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”!**

Notice, Jesus Christ, **Himself**, descends from heaven with a shout to call His children home. Isn't it wonderful, the Lord doesn't send an angel to “catch” His bride away! **Like any loving husband, He's going to personally “carry” His bride “over the threshold” of this evil world and into His beautiful, pure home in heaven! Thank you, Lord!**

By the way, did you notice the “first person pronoun” WE in verses 15 and 17? **Oh, I love this!** Paul includes himself and those that are alive when the Lord comes. He writes **“WE which are alive and remain shall be caught up...” Do you know why Paul includes himself in the WE which are alive and remain group – because every true child of God like Paul, is looking and longing for the rapture! Glory, glory! Joy to my heart 'twill bring;**

*Jesus is coming to earth again, What if it were today?
Coming in power and love to reign, What if it were today?
Coming to claim His chosen Bride, All the redeemed and purified,
Over this whole earth scattered wide, What if it were today?
Glory, glory! Joy to my heart 'twill bring;
Glory, glory! When we shall crown Him King.
Glory, glory! Haste to prepare the way;
Glory, glory! Jesus will come someday.*

No wonder Paul was constantly “looking” for the Lord to come back. He writes in Titus 2:13, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

Are you looking and longing for the Lord to come back like Paul? Are you READY for the Lord to come back? The Lord warns us in Mathew 24:44, “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh”

2. The Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15.

Our next “rapture” scripture is found in 1 Corinthians 15. It's interesting and enlightening the first 50 verses of 1 Corinthians 15 covers the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of believers and the promise of our new “celestial bodies” **then all of a sudden, beginning at verse 51, the Holy Spirit throws “a mystery” in the midst.**

51 **Behold, I shew you a mystery;** We shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed,**
52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead
shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,
then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the
Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Let us carefully walk through 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal these wonderful scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:51

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

This is not the Second Coming of Revelation 19, this is a “mystery”. **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth in Revelation 19 is not “a mystery”.** As we previously read, it is the most “revealed” and “promised” event in all the Bible. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 is a mystery, not the “normal” Second Coming of Christ. This is different – it is a “mystery”.

Sounding like 1 Thessalonians 4:15, “we shall not all sleep (or die), but we shall be changed. There are some Christians who will not die, but “shall be changed”. 1 Corinthians 15:52 goes on to describe this “changing” event:

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... It will be as quick as a “twinkle of an eye”. Not a blink, but even quicker, a “twinkling of an eye”. And the dead shall be raised incorruptible, that’s the “decayed, corrupted, stinking” bodies in the graves. Some have been there for 6000 years! Remember what Martha said to Jesus at the grave of Lazarus in John 11:39, when Jesus told them to “take away the stone”? “Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.” One day, the Lord will “raise incorruptible” millions of “vile, stinking, corrupted” bodies from the graves! And they will then receive their beautiful “celestial” bodies, “fashioned like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). ***What a day that will be!***

Philippians 3:20-21

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
21 **Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

At the end of verses in 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 15:52, the Bible speaks of those that are still alive – “... **we shall all changed,**”

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed,**
52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, **and we shall be changed.**

“and we shall be changed” The folks that are alive when the Lord comes, they will never die (John 11:26), but they can go to heaven in these vile, corrupt, earthly bodies, so they will be changed with a new immortal, body “fashioned like his glorious body”.

The Rapture of Enoch...

There is a man in Genesis chapter 5 named Enoch. Before the Lord destroyed the earth with a flood, Hebrews 11:5 reads, **“By faith Enoch WAS TRANSLATED that he should not see death; and was not found,..”** God “translated” or “changed” Enoch to take him into heaven. Enoch is a perfect picture of the rapture of the church found in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Before God brought His wrath and judgment of the flood, the Lord God “raptured” Enoch out. **And Praise the Lord, our Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, all angels, saints, and you who are born-again, Christian friend, before the Lord God brings His wrath and the judgment of the Great Tribulation.** He’s going to “rapture” His children out! Hallelujah!

It's also very interesting that the Holy Spirit in Jude 1:14, has Enoch prophesying of the coming of the Lord! There is no record in Genesis of Enoch prophesying the Lord coming back! Enoch lived around 4000 BC, nearly 6000 years (at least) before the Lord comes with His saints! But Enoch knew "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," Wow! Isn't the Bible an "amazing Book"!

Jude 1:14-15

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, **prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

1 Corinthians 15:53, describes this "changing" as two different groups of people. In one group the "corruptible MUST PUT ON incorruption"! Those "corruptible" group are the – "dead, vile, stinking, rotting, asleep" bodies in the grave that MUST PUT ON "incorruption" – "celestial, glorified, new, incorruptible" bodies! The other group are the "mortal" – that's the people that are alive, not dead, but are mortal – they will die UNLESS they MUST PUT ON immortality. The mortal MUST PUT ON immortality. Clearly, 1 Corinthians 15:53, is describing an event where dead bodies are changed, and living bodies are changed. **What could it be – but the rapture?**

1 Corinthians 15:53-58

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

1 Corinthians 15:55 again clarifies these "two groups" of people:

1 Corinthians 15:55

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

O death, where is thy sting – that's the Christians who are still alive and will never taste the "sting of death." They are the "mortal must put on immortality."

O grave, where is thy victory? – that's the Christian's bodies who are "asleep" in the grave, Their corrupted bodies "must put on incorruption."

1 Corinthians 15:55, has those wonderful, comforting words! Words worth more than all the gold and riches of this world. Words that have comforted the broken hearts of loved ones as they said their tearful goodbyes at the graveside. Thousands of preachers have stood at the grave with Christians, as their families mourned and weep, and repeated those beautiful words - "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

By the way, did you notice Paul "oops I did it again" moment in 1 Corinthians 15? Like 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul includes himself in those that are alive at the rapture. 1 Corinthians 15:51 he says, "... WE shall not all sleep, but WE shall all be changed". **Paul is trying awfully hard to get included in the rapture! Can you blame him?**

3. The Rapture in John 11

In John 11 at the death of Lazarus, the Lord Jesus also references the rapture. He references the same two groups of people in 1 Corinthians 15 that "believe in Him". In verse 25, the Lord says, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, **though he were dead, yet shall he live:**" **Like 1 Corinthians 15, these are dead, but shall live. And John 11:26, there are those that "... believeth in me shall never die".** Those "never die" are the folks that will be "caught up" (1 Thess. 4:17) or "changed" (1 Cor. 15:52). **Believing the simple scriptures -- what else could the Lord mean by the rapture?**

John 11:21-26

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: **he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

26 **And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.** Believest thou this?

4. The Rapture in John 14

The next verses we want to examine are found in John 14, a very familiar passage of comfort and hope.

John 14:1-3

- 1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
- 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you.**
- 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

In John 14:3, the Lord gives “five fantastic facts”:

1. And if I go - He's going to LEAVE
2. and prepare a place – He's LEAVING to prepare a place (verse 2 a mansion).
3. I will come again – He's leaving, but He's coming back.
4. and receive you unto myself - when He comes back He's going to “receive you” unto myself.
5. Where I am, there ye may be also – we will be with Lord.

John 14:3 matches 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 “to a tee”.

1. Jesus is coming back.

John 14:3 “.... I will come again...”

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “...For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout..”

2. The “saved” will meet the Lord when He comes again.

John 14:3 “...and receive you unto myself”

1 Thessalonians 4:17, “....caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:”

3. And we will be with the Lord

John 14:3, “.... that where I am, there ye may be also.”

1 Thessalonians 4:17, “...and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

There are many other verses that reference the rapture, which we will examine shortly, but these four scripture references plainly describe an event that matches the teaching of the rapture.

WHEN IS THE RAPTURE?

The Two “Separate” Comings of the Lord Jesus Christ...

Our next evidence for the rapture is the scriptures CLEARLY reveal two “separate comings” of the Lord Jesus Christ. One is called the “Rapture” and one is called the “Revelation”. Some Bible students reference these as ONE Second Coming with TWO stages or TWO phases. But to distinguish the two distinct “comings”, we will reference when Jesus Christ comes for His church in the air as the “Rapture” and when He returns to this earth with His church as the “Revelation”.

The “First” Second Coming – the Rapture.

In the first “coming”, called the Rapture, found in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, John 11, John 14 (which we previously reviewed), the Lord Jesus raises the “asleep” bodies of the dead “in Christ” from the graves; “catches up” the people alive to meet Him in the air; takes them into heaven to forever be with the Lord. **In the “rapture coming” the Lord does NOT come down to the earth, but meets born-again, Christians (“the church”) In the air.** In the Rapture, the Lord does NOT return to the earth. The “meets” the “born-again, saved” in the air and they all enter heaven with Him. **After the Lord and the Christians go to heaven, this “rapture coming” is finished and complete. And it is done.**

We will reveal in detail later, the Rapture occurs BEFORE the Great Tribulation...

The “Second” Coming – the Revelation.

The second “coming” is the most referenced event in all the Bible. When most people refer to the Second Coming of this is it. In this “coming”, the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the this earth in power and glory to bring judgment to this earth. He returns WITH His raptured Bride (“the church”) AFTER the Great Tribulation as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:16).

It occurs in Revelation 19 AFTER the Great Tribulation. In this “coming” Jesus Christ returns to this earth and setups “kingdom” on earth that begins with the millennial reign (Revelation 20). **Some refer to this coming as “The Revelation as He will “reveal” Himself as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, and “every eye shall see him” (Rev 19:11-16).** This “revelation coming” is obviously very different from the “catching up” we recently reviewed in 1 Thessalonians 4, Corinthians 15 and John 14.

The Revelation occurs in Revelation 19 AFTER the Great Tribulation...

Anyone that has honestly studied the Word of God, readily “sees” the two different and separate “comings” of Jesus Christ. The differences are impossible to truthfully ignore. In order to “make” the two comings the same, a person has to ignore, symbolize, discard, change and do serious damage to the integrity to the Word of God. The following quotes from respected prophecy authors testify the differences of these “two comings”.

These two episodes, the Rapture and the Second Coming, are so different that it is impossible to combine them. One involves His coming for His church; the other concerns His appearance in power and judgment to the earth.

(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p 38)

The confusion is largely due to the fact that students of Prophetic Truth do not distinguish between Christ's coming FOR His Saints, and WITH His Saints. The former is called the "Rapture," the later the "Revelation." Numerous passages in scripture speak of Christ coming "with" His Saints (Zech. 14:5, Col. 3:4, 1Thes. 3:13, 1Thes. 4:14, Jude 14), **but it is evident that they cannot come "with" Him, if they had not been previously caught out "to" Him.**

(Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, p. 14)

The Lord Jesus Christ—The same Jesus who was born of a virgin, crucified on the Cross of Calvary and who arose and ascended into heaven more than nineteen hundred years ago is coming back to this earth. The Scriptures assert this fact and Christians everywhere have always believed in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ... **However, one of the clearest facts in the Scriptures is this: there are two comings of the Lord Jesus**, still future: His coming *for* His Church and His coming *with* the church. The first is called the Rapture; the second is called the Revelation. **The first, the Rapture, will occur before the Tribulation and the second, the Revelation, will occur immediately after the Tribulation.**

(M.R. Dehaan, *Studies in Revelation*, p. 69)

For the first time it was revealed in John 14 that prior to the Second Coming there would be removal of believers in Christ from the earth. They would meet the Lord and go to the place He was going to prepare for them, an obvious reference to heaven. The purpose of this event would be to remove believers from earth and take them to the Father's house. This is an important point in understanding the doctrine, **because it makes clear that the purpose of the Rapture is entirely different from that of the Second Coming**, At His Second Coming, Jesus will come back to judge and reign over the earth. In the Rapture, He will come to take His own out of the world and take them to His Father's house. **The two events have nothing in common except that both are referred to as a “coming.”**

(John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies*, p. 313)

Though the Rapture and the Second Coming are described as comings because Christ leaves heaven and comes to the sphere of earth in both cases, **the two comings are entirely different.**

(John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Prophecies*, p. 337)

It is extremely important for us to understand that according to the words of Jesus believers will go to heaven *to be with Him* when He comes in the Rapture, and then when He comes to set up the kingdom believers will come with Him *from heaven* and will reign with Him during the Millennium. So if the purpose of Christ's coming is to take believers from earth to heaven, it would certainly be foolish to say that He will *come for the saints* on His way to earth to establish His millennial kingdom! **The two events are assuredly and decidedly different.**

(Oliver B. Greene, *Bible Prophecy*, p. 197)

In Revelation 19:7-9 it is revealed that the consummation of the union between Christ and the church precedes the second advent. In many passages, such as Matthew 25: 1-13; 22: 1-14; and Luke 12: 35-41, the King is seen in the role of Bridegroom at His coming, indicating that the marriage has taken place. This event, likewise, requires the expiration of a period of time and **makes the view that the rapture and revelation are simultaneous events impossible.**

The following are some obvious differences between the Rapture and Revelation revealed in the Word of God. In our comparison, we will refer to the comings as the "Rapture" and the "Revelation".

THE DIFFERENCE IN "WHY" HE IS COMING.

In the "Rapture"; WHY the Lord Jesus Christ comes is DELIVERANCE:

1. raise the "asleep" bodies of all the "dead in Christ". (1 Thess. 4:16, 1 Cor 15:53-54)
2. "catch up" into heaven the Christians that are alive on the earth (1 Thess 4:16, 1 Cor 15:51)
3. both will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:17)
4. and shall ever be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17)
5. He will come as "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13)
6. After that, the Rapture is completed and finished.

In the "Revelation"; WHY the Lord Jesus comes is JUDGMENT and WRATH:

1. To judge the world – "he should smite the nations": (Rev. 19:11)
2. In the Wrath of God - "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev 19:11)
3. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thess. 1:8)
4. After that, the millennial reign and the Kingdom begins.

THE DIFFERENCE IN "HOW" HE IS COMING.

In the "Rapture"; HOW the Lord Jesus Christ comes is:

1. He comes in the air to meet the Christians in clouds
 2. He does NOT come to the earth, only in the air.
 3. The Lord Himself descends from heaven (not angels) 1 Thess. 4:16)
 4. He comes with a shout, the trump of God (1 Thess. 4:16)
 5. He comes suddenly – in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52)
 6. He comes without any warning "signs". . . "for in such an hour as ye think" (Matt 24:44)
 7. He comes as a "thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10)
- When a "thief" comes, He gets the precious jewels (Christians)
And then leaves, He doesn't stay. He is not seen or heard.
8. His coming is "a mystery" (1 Cor 15:51)
 9. He will come FOR the church, born-again Christians - His Bride.

In the "Revelation"; HOW the Lord Jesus comes is completely different:

1. He comes back to the earth, not just in the clouds
His feet will land on this earth, Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4)
2. He will not come suddenly "in the twinkling of an eye" but "heaven will open, and He will come on a white horse... with the armies of heaven" (Rev 19:11, 14)
3. He will come, not as a "thief in the night", but "every eye shall see him" (Rev 1:7)
4. He will send His angels to gather the wicked for judgment (Matt. 13:41-42, 49)
5. This coming is not a mystery, but the main and "well-known" subject of all the Old Testament prophets
6. There are many signs of this coming (Matt 24:3, Matt 16:3)
7. He will come back, not as a thief, but as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev. 19:16)
8. He shall come back in "power and great glory" (Matt 24:30).
9. He will come to JUDGE the whole world.
10. He will come back WITH "raptured" born-again Christians (the church, His Saints, His Bride) FROM heaven. (Rev. 19:14, Zech 14:5, Jude 1:14)

THE DIFFERENCE IN "WHEN" HE IS COMING.

In the "Rapture"; WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ comes is BEFORE the Great Tribulation:

1. BEFORE the Great Tribulation (Rev. 4:1)
2. The Rapture is a "comfort" (1 Thess. 4:18) and a "blessed HOPE" (Titus 2:13) because it occurs BEFORE the great tribulation.

In the "Revelation"; WHEN the Lord Jesus comes is AFTER the Great Tribulation:

1. Matthew 24:29 "Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days" Matt 24:29-30
2. The Second Coming of Revelation 19 occurs AFTER the Great Tribulation of Rev. chapters 6-18.

WHY IS THE RAPTURE?

The Deliverance From The Wrath To Come...

We studied the what, the where and the when about the rapture, but the really distinguishing difference of the Rapture and the Revelation is the WHY. **Once we understand the WHY, the pieces of the Rapture easily come together.**

In the Rapture, WHY the Lord Jesus Christ comes is DELIVERANCE. In the Rapture, the Lord “catches out” His bride church, BEFORE the Great Tribulation. In the “Second Coming” of Revelation 19 is JUDGMENT and the WRATH of God. Notice in the following verses in Revelation 19 describing the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the JUDGMENT and WRATH of God.

Revelation 19:11-15

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, **and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: **and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

1 Thessalonians 1:10 paints a completely different picture of the coming of Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 is an obvious prophetic reference to the Rapture. It gives us the WHY of the Rapture as a **PROMISE** to “delivered us from wrath to come”. Notice, the context and pretext for “**delivered us from the wrath to come.**” – “**to wait for his Son from heaven**”. **It is impossible to make 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Revelation 19 the same event. Their purpose and WHY is totally different.**

1 Thessalonians 1:10

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, **which delivered us from the wrath to come.**

In 1 Thessalonians 1:10 the “deliverance” can NOT be referring to the “wrath” of hell in salvation. **Hell is not a “wrath to come”. Hell is already here.** Luke 16:22-23, says of the rich man, “. . . the rich man also died, and was buried; And he lift up his eyes. . .” **Hell is not coming, it is already “here and waiting”. It is the final destination for the dead who die without Jesus Christ.**

And not only that, we are not commanded “. . . to wait for his Son from heaven. . .” to deliver us from the wrath of hell. Thank God, that “deliverance” takes place the very second a sinner receives Jesus Christ as their Saviour! Colossians 1:13 writes of our immediate deliverance “from the powers of darkness” found in salvation through “His blood”.

Colossians 1:13-14

13 **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,** and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

The promise of “delivered us from the wrath to come” found in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 MUST reference a future event that commands us “to WAIT for His Son from heaven”. There is only one honest interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 1:10. It MUST be the Rapture! The Lord Jesus is coming from heaven to deliver some people from the “wrath to come.”

The Wrath to Come.

Make no mistake, as a child of God we will have tribulation and troubles. As the song says, “Troubles and trials often betray us, causing the weary body to stray”. The Word of God flows with the tears, troubles and tribulations of God’s people. If one could wring out the Word of God like a dish rag, it’s tears would fill an ocean. Tears and tribulation are the common companion of God’s people.

The Lord Jesus warned us in John 16:33, we will experience “tribulation of the world”.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have**

John writing the book of Revelation while working the treacherous salt mines on the isle of Patmos, acknowledges his situation as a **“companion in tribulation.”**

Revelation 1:9

I John, who also am your brother, **and companion in tribulation**, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The early church in Acts went through much tribulation. The Apostles all died a horrible, martyrs death except John. They were beaten, stoned, jailed, persecuted, and killed. Tribulation was their constant companion. Paul says in Acts 20:23 “....Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.” Paul knew in every city, jail and beatings are waiting for him. Yes, dear friend. The Christian life carries it’s “bonds and afflictions”. Tribulation is part of the Christian walk.

A few verses from the Word of God testify that we will suffer tribulation and persecution.

Acts 14:22

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must **through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.**

2 Corinthians 7:4

Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, **I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.**

1 Thessalonians 3:4

For verily, when we were with you, **we told you before that we should suffer tribulation**; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

2 Thessalonians 1:4

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith **in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:**

Throughout history, Christians have suffered tribulation and persecutions. Anyone that has read Foxes Book of Martyrs or The Martyrs Mirrors knows the terrible tribulation God’s people have endured. The stories of Richard Wurmbrand (Tortured For Christ) and Haralan Popov (Tortured For His Faith) loudly testify the “wrath of men” toward God’s people. Even today throughout the world, Christians are tortured and persecuted for their Christian faith. According to Open Doors, 245 million Christians in the world today experience high levels of persecution for their choice to follow Christ. (<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/christian-persecution-by-the-numbers/>)

Hebrews 11 is the famous “Faith Hall of Fame” of the scriptures. It tells of amazing supernatural victories and deliverances of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and many others. Verses 34-35 describes the wonderful deliverance from the Lord: “Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” (Hebrews 11:34-35). Reading Hebrews 11:1-35, one would believe supernatural deliverance was always God’s plan.

But verses 36-37 in Hebrews 11, paints a completely different picture of the suffering and tribulation of God’s people.

Hebrews 11:36-37

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:
37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

The Word of God, clearly, *and without apology*, in 2 Timothy 3:12, informs us we “shall (not maybe) suffer persecution

2 Timothy 3:12

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

The fact is (**and it is a fact**) Christians, today and throughout history, have suffered terrible persecution and tribulation. **The question is - why should “some Christians” be “raptured” from “the Great Tribulation”?** Why shouldn’t they also go through “tribulation”? What is so special about those Christians living before the “Great Tribulation”? Why would “the Lord himself” descend from heaven and “catch up” those Christians “into heaven” before the tribulation? While others have suffered such horrible persecution. **Why? What’s the difference...?**

The Difference is the Wrath of Almighty God.

The tribulation and suffering the Apostles and Christians suffered throughout history was the “wrath of man, the world, Satan.” And the wrath they suffered was **because** of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The wrath in Great Tribulation is the Holy Wrath of Almighty God. That is one reason it so horrible, That’s why the Lord says of that time, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time nor ever shall be.” ***According to the Lord, it will be the worse time in the history of the world!***

The following verses, describe the horrible “wrath of God” in the tribulation period.

Revelation 6:15-17

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, **and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

17 **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

Revelation 14:19

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, **and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**

Revelation 15:1

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; **for in them is filled up the wrath of God.**

Revelation 15:7

And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials **full of the wrath of God**, who liveth for ever and ever.

Revelation 16:1

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and **pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.**

Revelation 16:19

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of **the fierceness of his wrath.**

When Jesus Christ returns in Revelation 19:15, He “treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

Revelation 19:15

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: **and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

Make no mistake, the seven-year tribulation is an outpour of “the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

As a born-again, child of God – God is our Loving Father. Like a young, vulnerable infant babbling “dada” Romans 8:15 says, “. . . whereby we cry, Abba, Father”.

Romans 8:15

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, **Abba, Father.**

1 John 3:1

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

IMPORTANT! A person that has NOT received the Lord Jesus Christ and has not been born again spiritually (John 3:16) – **is NOT a child of God.** The new birth and being born again, is when a person becomes a child of God. This happens when a person by faith “receives the Lord Jesus Christ.” John 1:12 says, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power **to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**” **The Lord says in John 8:44, an unsaved persons’ father is the devil.**

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

If you are truly saved - God is your Father. And your Father is not going to punish you with "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Yes, like any good Father, He loves His children and will chasten His children. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth", but that is NOT "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" poured out during the Great Tribulation. When the Lord chastens us, it is because He loves us (**For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. . . Hebrews 12:6**), it shows His love and it is to correct us. It is like our earthly father in Proverbs 13:24, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: **but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.**"

Hebrews 12:6

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Revelation 3:19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. for our good and

J. Dwight Pentecost, in his prophetic classic, *Things to Come*, describes the tribulation as follows:

There are a number of words used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the seventieth week period [the great tribulation], which, when considered together, give us the essential nature or character of this period: (1) wrath (Rev. 6: 16-17; 11: 18; 14: 19; 15: 1, 7; 16: 1, 19; 1 Thess. 1: 9-10; 5: 9; Zeph. 1: 15, 18); (2) judgment (Rev. 14: 7; 15: 4; 16: 5-7; 19: 2); (3) indignation (Isa. 26: 20-21; 34: 1-3); (4) punishment (Isa. 24: 20-21); (5) hour of trial (Rev. 3: 10); (6) hour of trouble (Jer. 30: 7); (7) destruction (Joel 1: 15); (8) darkness (Joel 2: 2; Zeph. 1: 14-18; Amos 5: 18)... **Let us get clearly in mind the nature of the Tribulation, that it is divine "wrath"...**

(J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pp. 270-271)

Dwight Pentecost continues by reminding Christians our "deliverance from the wrath of God" from the tribulation.

We know that our blessed Lord bore for us the wrath of God and His judgment; therefore we who are in Him "shall not come into judgment." The antithesis of 1 Thess. 5: 9 is conclusive evidence: "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." **Wrath for others, but salvation for us at the Rapture.**

(J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pp. 270-271)

John 3:36 reads the "**wrath of God**" abideth on him that "**believeth not the Son**", but those "that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life". John 3:36 clearly contrasts the "saved" and "unsaved" from the "wrath of God". **Would the Tribulation period somehow make John 3:36 untrue? Either the Lord Jesus is telling the truth in John 3:36 or not. . .**

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; **but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

Many verses in the New Testament *clearly and loudly* proclaim and promise Christians are saved and delivered from wrath of God. **Why would the Tribulation make the Lord a liar? That may sound harsh. . . But. . . Surely, if the "saved" are going through the severe "wrath of God" during the Tribulation, the following wonderful promise plainly "not true".**

Romans 5:6-9

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, **we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

1 Thessalonians 1:10

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, **which delivered us from the wrath to come.**

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, BUT to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

In 1 Thessalonians 4, where the clearest verses in the Word of God describe the rapture is found, it ends with this assurance in verse 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." What a comfort it is to have the promise from the Lord that "we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" BEFORE the tribulation period and the wrath of God. **How could "these words" be ANY comfort if we were destined for the "winepress of the FIERCENESS and WRATH of almighty God" (Rev. 19:15) in the tribulation?**

1 Thessalonians 4:16

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Evangelist and author Oliver Greene comments on the "comfort" of 1 Thessalonians 4:18:

These words bring comfort that no other doctrine in the Word of God can bring! I ask you: What comfort would the message of the second coming bring if Jesus were not coming until after the tribulation? If we must go through the horrible time described in the Word of God as 'the time of Jacob's trouble' how could Paul say, "COMFORT one another with these words"?

What comfort to know we are not appointed to wrath. We are not looking for Antichrist, but for THE Christ! We are not looking for the tribulation. But for the Rapture. We are not looking for a day of darkness, but for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I say with John the Beloved, 'Even so, come. Lord Jesus!'

(Oliver B. Greene, *Bible Prophecy*, pp. 201, 204)

Deliverance From the Wrath of God.

The Word of God provides us with several wonderful examples where our merciful God "delivers" His people BEFORE the wrath of God.

The Deliverance of Noah...

There is the man named Noah. Much like the coming tribulation period, the wrath of Almighty God was going to be outpoured on all the earth. In fact, in Matthew 24:37 the Lord Jesus likens His second coming to the days of Noe [Noah]. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37

Genesis 6 describes the world condition in the days of Noah. The wrath of the Lord was to completely "destroy man, and beast from the face of the earth". The world would soon experience "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Genesis 6:5

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, **I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth;** both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

And when it appeared as if no hope for mankind was left. When all was lost... The next verse, Genesis 6:8 has some of the greatest words ever uttered! Without them, you and I, would have never existed! We would not be reading this...

Genesis 6:8

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Thank God for grace! Grace is an unmerited, undeserved, favor and love! And without grace, none of us would be here. And it was the grace of God that delivered Noah from the wrath of God! **And hallelujah! It is the "grace of God" that delivered us from the wrath of God!**

Acts 15:11

But we believe that **through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved**, even as they.

Romans 3:24

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound***That saved a wretch like me!***

I once was lost, but now am found;

Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,

I have already come;

'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.

Thank God, the same grace that delivered Noah from the wrath of God from the flood, will deliver the child of God from the wrath of God from the tribulation! Do you realize not one drop of rain from the wrath of God fell until Noah entered into the ark? The Bible says in Genesis 7:13, **“In the selfsame day entered Noah” into the ark, the rain came**. But not BEFORE Noah entered into the ark! **The tribulation of the wrath of God can NOT come BEFORE the child of God are “delivered”!** Thank you Lord!

Genesis 7:11-13

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 **In the selfsame day entered Noah**, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

In Luke 17:26, the Lord Jesus compares the days of Noah to the coming of Jesus Christ, Luke 17:27 says **“the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came**, and destroyed them all.” Not one day before or one day after. **The wrath of God came AFTER Noah entered into the ark.**

Luke 17:26-27

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, **until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.**

The Deliverance of Enoch...

One of the clearest prophetic pictures of the rapture is the man named Enoch. He is found in Genesis chapter 5 BEFORE the great flood. The Bible says in Genesis 5:22, “And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah...” It's interesting (and VERY enlightening) that the scriptures say, Enoch walked with God “AFTER he begat Methuselah”. What's the significance of AFTER Methuselah? Apparently the Lord God, revealed to Enoch that judgment was coming (see Jude 1:14). The name “Methuselah” means “when he is dead it shall be sent” an obvious reference to the flood and the wrath of God. No wonder Enoch walked with God AFTER he begat Methuselah. It's worth mentioning: that Methuselah lived nine hundred sixty and nine years! Longer than any other human, hence the saying “old as Methuselah”. The longsuffering God waited 969 years before His wrath came down! 1 Peter 3:20, “... **when once the longsuffering of God waited for the days of Noah...**”

Like the coming “rapture” of the church, Hebrews 11:5 says, “. . . **Enoch was translated** that he should not see death.” 1 Corinthians 15:51 says at the rapture, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, **but we shall all be changed**,” As Enoch was “translated that he should not see death”. . . at the rapture “We shall not all sleep [death], but we shall all be changed”. Hebrews 11:5 also declares, Enoch “was not found.” **Like during the rapture, Enoch was “not found” on this earth, but “caught up” into heaven** (1 Thess. 4:17).

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Jude 1:14 provides a prophetic link to Enoch and the second coming with the judgment of God.

Jude 1:14-15

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, **prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

15 **To execute judgment upon all**, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have

The Deliverance of Lot...

One of the most amazing and merciful deliverances from the wrath of God is the man Lot. Because of the sin of sodomy (homosexuality) the Word of God says in Genesis 18:20, "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is 'very grievous'. The wrath of a Holy God would completely destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone.

In Genesis 19, the Lord God sends two angels to deliver Lot from the judgment and wrath of God. In Genesis 19:13, the angels tell Lot, "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and we have brought thee down out of the land of the Chaldeans, to destroy thee." The LORD hath sent us to destroy it."

The mercy and grace of God forcibly "delivered" Lot from the wrath of God – **even as Lot "lingered"**. The Bible says in Genesis 19:16, "And while he lingered, **the men laid hold upon his hand**, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. **The angels are literally pulling Lot out of Sodom by the hand!**

Even after the angels literally pull Lot out, he still argues with the angels on leaving Sodom. Genesis 19:22 has one of the greatest examples of the mercy and grace of God in all the Bible. The angel tells Lot, "Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. . ."

In other words, the Lord could NOT destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot was removed! What a wonderful picture of the rapture! **The Lord can not bring His wrath until God's children have removed!** Genesis 19:24 reads, "THE LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven". What was the **THE** Verse 23 "... WHEN Lot entered into Zoar". Wow! Isn't that a beautiful picture of the mercy of God! **Not one little spark of fire from the "... brimstone and fire from the LORD. . ." could rain until Lot was delivered!**

Genesis 19:22-24

22 Haste thee, escape thither; **for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.** Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23 The sun was risen upon the earth **when Lot entered into Zoar.**

24 **THEN the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah** Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven

Like "in the days of Noah", Luke 17 also likens the second coming of Jesus Christ with Lot. Luke 17:29 also says, "But on the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." **The same day that Lot went out of Sodom the wrath of God fell, not one day before or one day after, Amazing, are you getting this?**

Luke 17:28-30

28 **Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot;** they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 **But the SAME DAY that Lot went out of Sodom** it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.**

2 Peter 2, provides some incredible insight into the mercy of God. 2 Peter 2:7 says Lot was "**vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:**" **Remember in Genesis 19 Lot didn't want to leave. His wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt!** And yet the Lord delivered Lot. Let's not forget Genesis 19:22: The Lord could NOT rain judgment on Sodom until Lot had escaped. Referring to Lot, 2 Peter 2:9 tells us, "**The Lord knoweth how to DELIVER the godly out of temptations**, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." My friend, that is a wonderful insight to the "catching up" of the rapture! **The Lord knoweth how to DELIVER the godly out of temptations!** Thank you, Lord, for delivering Lot!

2 Peter 2:6-9

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, **vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:**

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, **vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;**)

9 **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations**, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Now I ask you: **Do you think God loves the bride of His only begotten Son *any less* that He loved Noah and Lot?** I think not! God loves the Church, and you can rest assured that not one moment of the Great Tribulation will occur on this earth until the Church is safe with Jesus up above the storm. (Oliver B. Greene, *Bible Prophecy*, p. 194)

Amen, Brother Greene, Amen!

WHO IS IN THE RAPTURE?

So far, we have viewed the what, the where, the when and the why of the Rapture. Our next view is the WHO of the Rapture. With each "view" of the Rapture, the Word of God clears up and enhances our vision of the Rapture.

The Disappearing Church...

In Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus "proves" and "reproves" the seven churches. In every address, He begins with "I know thy works" (Rev 2:2, 2:9, 2:13, 2:19, 3:1, 3:8, 3:15) and He admonishes the churches. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Perhaps the greatest evidence for the Rapture of the Church is the absence of the Church in the Tribulation of chapters 4-18 in the book of Revelation. There's no honest way to discount nor ignore the disappearance of the church. The church is very important to the Lord. For the church to be "missing" is no "accident". **It's very enlightening, the word "church" is mentioned 19 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, but the "church" is completely absent in Revelation 4-21.** The only other time the "church" is mentioned is at the end in Revelation 22:16.

It's "no coincident" the church is not mentioned in the "tribulation chapters" 6-18 in Revelation. There are "no coincident" in the Word of God. Jesus Christ says in Matthew 4:4, **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."** **"Every word" of the Word of God is very important to the Lord.** In Matthew 5:18, the Lord takes the "inspiration" and "preservation" of the Word of God down to the smallest little detail. Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle** shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." A "jot" is the smallest Greek letter iota, we say "the smallest iota" from the King James Bible. The "tittle" is an accent mark in Hebrew, the equivalent of the "dot" on our "i". Simply put, there are no "accidents" or "coincidents" in the Word of God. **The "64-million-dollar-question" is - why is the "church" not mentioned in Revelation 4-18?**

Indeed, there is a REASON the Lord does NOT mention the church in chapters 4-18 of the tribulation. Would you like to take a "wild guess"? **You got it! The church is not mentioned in the tribulation period of Revelation 4-18 because the church is NOT IN the tribulation! Could the Lord possibly make it any plainer?**

Oliver Greene acknowledges the disappearance of the Church in his *Revelation Commentary*:

In the first three chapters of Revelation, the word church or churches occurs about twenty times [19 times]. However, beginning with chapter four, up the seventeenth verse of chapter twenty-two, the Church is not mentioned one time. The Church has no part in the prophetic visions given to John after chapter three. **Therefore, if we 'come now and reason together,' we must conclude that the Church is not on earth from chapter four through chapter twenty-two, verse five.** (Oliver Greene, *Revelation Commentary*, p. 151)

John and the Church...

It's worth mentioning that the writer of Revelation, John, is a picture of the church. John is known as "John the beloved". John 13:23 says, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved." According to John 13:23, John, like the Church, (the Bride of Christ), had a "special" relationship to the Lord. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**" The Gospel of John portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of God and the Son of God. In John 21 the Lord Jesus provides an interesting prophetic reference concerning John. When Peter asked the Lord about John: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus answered with a "bombshell" revelation about John and the Second Coming – **"If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me". It's amazing how the Lord answers Peter.** Clearly, this is a "prophetic" revelation of His church - **"If I will that he tarry till I come"**. The "wording" the Lord uses is amazing! It is the "church" that will **"tarry TILL I come"**.

TAR'RY

1. To stay; to abide; to continue; to lodge.
2. To stay behind.
3. To stay in expectation; to wait.

Is that not a “perfect” position of the church today? The church is “tarrying” – “abiding; waiting; to stay in expectation” - for the coming of Christ! “If I will that he tarry till I come”. After He comes, the church “no longer tarry”. The church no longer “stays behind” Why? Because the church has “left the building”! **Could it be any clearer? What else could the “tarry” be but the rapture? The “tarrying” of John 21 can not possibly be the Second Coming of Revelation 19 because His “bride”, the church, comes back with Jesus from heaven! The ONLY “tarry till I come” could possibly reference is the Rapture!**

John 21:20-23

- 20 Then Peter, turning about, **seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper**, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?
- 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?
- 22 Jesus saith unto him, **If I will that he tarry till I come**, what is that to thee? follow thou me.
- 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

The Rapture in Revelation 4...

In Revelation chapter 4, after the “church” is mentioned 19 times in Chapter 2 and 3, something happens. Something amazing happens! An event occurs in Revelation 4:1-2 that **looks and sounds** a lot like the Rapture of 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15. **In fact, a closer look at Revelation 4:1-2, clearly reveals Revelation 4:1-2 as the Rapture of Church.** The reason the church is no longer mentioned in Revelation after chapter 3 is simple – in chapter 4 the church “comes up hither”!

Revelation 4:1-2

- 1 After this I looked, and, behold, **a door was opened in heaven**: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **Come up hither**, and I will shew **thee things which must be hereafter**.
- 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Notice, the words after the “come up hither” call – **“and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” Here AFTER what? What happened BEFORE Revelation 4:1? The seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The “Heavenly Church” AFTER was the completion of the church age.**

Many Bible teachers believe the seven churches mentioned in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, are not merely local churches in Asia, but the prophetic panoramic periods of the church age – from it’s beginning of the first apostolic church; to the Laodecean church. The New Testament epistles written to the “churches” of their day were not “confined” to just the churches of the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, et. al. of that time, but were obviously written to all the churches throughout the church age. Just the same, these seven churches of Revelation are not just local churches of that day but represent the churches throughout the church age.

A few insights and examples from Bible teachers reflect this view:

John, in the book of Revelation, is writing concerning things that were past, things that are present, and things that are future (Rev. 1:19). **It would seem evident, then, that John in writing to the seven churches, is depicting this present age from the inception of the church to the judgment of the apostate church prior to the second advent.**
(Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come*, p. 150)

As chapter four [Revelation 4:1] is a vision of the "Glorified Church" with the Lord, after it has been caught out (1 Thess. 4:13-17), then the Second Division of the Book-- "The Things Which Are," and which includes chapters two and three, **must be a description or prophetic outline of the "Spiritual History" of the Church from the time when John wrote the Book in A. D. 96, down to the taking out of the Church, or else we have no "prophetic view" of the Church during that period, for she disappears from the earth at the close of chapter three, and is not seen again until she reappears with her Lord in chapter nineteen.**
(Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 18)

The messages to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 go beyond the particular churches of the first century and present a prophetic look at the course of church history from the apostolic age to the rapture of the body of Christ.

(James Knox, *The Book of Revelation*, p 47)

James Knox gives eleven reasons for claiming the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 contain a prophetic vision of church history. We list a few below:

It would be incredible if, in a prophetic book (Revelation) concerning the whole period of the existence of the church of God on earth, there should be no prophecy concerning the church.

If a prophetic foreview of the church is to be found in Revelation, it must be found in chapters 2 and 3, for there is no mention of the church on earth after chapter 3.

Most conclusively, their message DO INDEED present an exact picture of the history of the church and in precisely the order in which that are given. The parallels between these messages to these assemblies and the history of the church on earth are too exact and too numerous to be accidental.

(James Knox, *The Book of Revelation*, pp 47-48)

As we previously commented, nothing in the Bible is accidental or haphazard. Every word is from the perfect "mind and plan of God Almighty." With that thought, it is no "accident" that "seven" churches represent the church age listed in Revelation. **Seven in the Bible is the number of "completion"**. The first time the word "seven" occurs in the King James Bible is Genesis 2:2, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." **Seven days ENDED His work – it was completed.**

Now we come to the number seven, there is no need for a great deal of thought or research or study or consideration as **Seven is so obviously the number of completion that it doesn't need any justification...** Seven is plainly the number of completion. This is apparent at the beginning of the Bible and at the end of the Bible.

(Peter S. Ruckman, *Bible Numerics*)

The whole Word of God is founded upon the number SEVEN. It stands for the SEVENTH day of the Creation Week. . . **It denotes COMPLETENESS or PERFECTION.**

(Ed. F. Vallowe, *Biblical Mathematics*, p. 80)

There are SEVEN FEASTS in the Bible. SEVEN dispensations. When Joshua took Jericho there were SEVEN priests bearing SEVEN trumpets that marched around Jericho SEVEN times (Joshua 6:13-16). Solomon COMPLETED the temple of the Lord in SEVEN years (1 King 6:38). The last book in the scriptures (Revelation), that COMPLETES the scripture, contains the word "SEVEN" 59 times. The COMPLETED book of Revelation has SEVEN churches (Rev. 1:4); SEVEN spirits (Rev. 1:4, 4:5); SEVEN gold candlesticks (Rev. 1:12); SEVEN stars (Rev. 1:16); SEVEN lamps (Rev 4:5); SEVEN seals (Rev.5:1); SEVEN horns (Rev. 5:6); SEVEN eyes (Rev.5:6); SEVEN angels (Rev. 8:2); SEVEN trumpets (Rev. 8:7); SEVEN thunders (Rev. 10:3); SEVEN thousand men slain (Rev. 11:13); SEVEN heads (Rev. 12:3); SEVEN crowns (Rev. 12:3); SEVEN plagues (Rev. 15:1); SEVEN vials (Rev. 15:7); SEVEN mountains (Rev. 17:9); SEVEN kings (Rev. 17:17). Why, the number SEVEN COMPLETES and SEALS the BIBLE

We could go on and on and on documenting the number SEVEN as COMPLETION. For instance; SEVEN days COMPLETE a week. SEVEN notes COMPLETE a musical scale, SEVEN colors COMPLETE the color spectrum.

And may I add, the SEVEN churches of Revelation 2-3 COMPLETE the church age.

The Rapture in Revelation 4...

We mentioned earlier, Revelation 4:1-2, "sounds" a lot like the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. In fact, a "verse comparison" reveals they are all the same event.

Revelation 4:1-2

1 After this I looked, and, behold, **a door was opened in heaven**: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **Come up hither**, and I will shew **thee things which must be hereafter**.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 reads there is a “shout” and **“the trump of God”**.
 Revelation 4 says John hears a “voice” that sounds “as it were of **a trumpet talking with me**”.
 1Corinthians 15:52 **“...at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound...”**

A “trumpet” sound can signify a “loud voice” or a “shout”. Revelation 1:10 reads, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard **behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**”

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind **me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**

Come Up and Caught Up.

Revelation 4:1 says “come UP hither” and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says “caught UP” .

Revelation 4:1 reads “come” (not “go”) meaning you are “coming” to “meet” someone.
 1 Thessalonians 4:17: “to meet the Lord in the air”

In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Revelation 4:1-2, they go UP into heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Then we which are alive and remain shall be **CAUGHT UP together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: **and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

Revelation 4:1-2

1 After this I looked, and, behold, **a door was opened in heaven:** and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, **COME UP hither,** and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 **And immediately I was in the spirit:** and, behold, **a throne was set in heaven,** and one sat on the throne.

In a Moment, In the Twinkling of an Eye

In 1 Corinthians 15:52, the Rapture happens “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye”. Revelation 4:1-2, “And immediately I was in the spirit”.

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Revelation 4:1-2

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 **And immediately I was in the spirit:** and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Without question, Revelation 4:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 are the same event. The timing, the trump, the entry into heaven and the immediately are no “coincidence”.

The famous *Scofield Reference Bible* in the notes for Revelation 4:1 reads:

This call seems clearly to indicate the fulfillment of 1 Thess. 4.14-17. The word “church” does not again occur in Revelation till all is finished.

(*Scofield Reference Bible*, Revelation 4:1)

Who is the Church in the Rapture?

Before we leave our study of the Disappearance of the Church after Revelation chapter 3, let us define who is the “disappearing church in the rapture”. For that answer, we must take a trip into the Bible definition of the church.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, **and upon this rock I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Roman Catholicism falsely teach that Peter is “this rock” the church is built upon. Based upon Matthew 16:18, they all teach Peter was the first Pope, among MANY other false and damnable teachings.

The Greek word for Peter is petros, which means a stone. The Greek word for Rock is Petra. They are not the same. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word “Peter” in Matthew 16:18 as “Petros” - **a (piece of) rock**. The word “rock” as “petra” - **a (mass of) rock**.

Peter S. Ruckman clearly explains the difference in his Matthew commentary:

The word “Peter” is P-E-T-E-R; the word “rock” is R-O-C-K. The word for Peter (in Greek) is *Petros*; the word for rock (in Greek) is *Petra*...
 “Petros” (Peter) is a rock the size of a baseball or basket ball. . . “petra” (“the rock-ledge”) is a slab of rock big enough to land a DC-5 on. **The only way you can make the two equal is to deny your God-given senses of reasoning**
 (Peter S. Ruckman, *Matthew Commentary*, p. 293, 296)

Clarence Larkin in *Dispensational Truth* distinguishes between Peter and the Rock:

Notice that there is here a little play upon words. It is from the Greek word "petros" that the word Peter is taken. "Petros" in the Greek means a stone, the small fragment of a rock, while the Greek word "Petra" means a rock, or large mass of stone.
 (Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, p. 76)

Comparing scripture with scripture, many verses clearly and emphatically identify the Rock. **And it is NOT Peter!**

Romans 9:33

As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and **rock of offence**: and whosoever **believeth on him** [the rock] shall not be ashamed.

1 Corinthians 10:4

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of **that spiritual Rock** that followed them: **and that Rock was Christ**.

1 Peter 2:7-8

7 Unto you therefore which **believe he is precious**: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
 8 And a stone of stumbling, **and a rock of offence**, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Psalms 18:2

The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalms 62:2

He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

Clearly, Peter is NOT the Rock of our salvation! Thank God, Peter (who later curses and denies the Lord) is NOT the rock of the New Testament church! Hallelujah! Like that old song sings, “On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand (including Peter and the Pope – and everybody else!).

Deuteronomy 32 has a serious warning to those who are trusting in another Rock besides the Lord:

Deuteronomy 32:3-5, 31

3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.
 4 **He is the Rock**, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.
 5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.. .
 31 **For their rock is not as our Rock**, . . .

1 Corinthians 3:11

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, **which is Jesus Christ**.

The word Church comes from the Greek word "ecclesia" which means "called out assembly". As born-again Christians are "called out" from this world. *"This world is NOT my home, I'm just a passing thru"*. Jesus Christ and the Word of God makes this very clear. The following verses, (among hundreds) testify to this "calling out".

John 15:19

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: **but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world**, therefore the world hateth you.

John 17:14

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, **because they are not of the world**, even as I am not of the world.

2 Corinthians 6:14

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 **Wherefore come out from among them**, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

1 Peter 2:7-10

7 **Unto you therefore which believe he is precious**: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, **a peculiar people**; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who **hath called you out** of darkness into his marvellous light:

10 Which in time past were not a people, **but are now the people of God**: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

The word "church" occurs 117 times in the King James Bible. The word "church" does not appear in the Old Testament only in the New Testament. **The "church" is a "mystery" (Ephesians 5:32) revealed in the New Testament.** Note: 7:38 refers to Moses and Israel as "the church in the wilderness". In the literal meaning of the "church" - a "called out assembly", certainly Israel met this qualification. But the New Testament definition of the church is much different.

There are two "forms" of the Church in the New Testament. One is a physical group of people "assembled" in a building, store-front, house, et. al. to worship the Lord. This form of the church is the most commonly recognized. Throughout the New Testament we see this "physical" church-assembly mentioned.

Matthew 18:17

And if he shall neglect to hear them, **tell it unto the church**: **but if he neglect to hear the church**, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Acts 14:23

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 14:27

And when they were come, **and had gathered the church together**, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Romans 16:5

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:18

For first of all, **when ye come together in the church**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

This “physical” church is an “organization” with church “officers” or “leaders” - the pastor or bishop and the elders or deacons. These “physical” church “assemblies” form the basis of our denominations: such as Methodist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Baptist, et. al. These “physical” churches contain both “saved” and “lost” people. A “saved” person is someone that has truly been “born-again” (John 3:5). I’ve known many church members that sat in church, week after week – for years, lost as a “golf ball in high weeds”. Some later got “born again” – but some never did. No doubt church buildings contain lost church “members”. They sit in church week after week, year after year – and sadly, one day will die a “lost church member” and go to hell! **What a tragedy!**

Jesus Christ warned about these “lost” church members in Matthew 7:21-23

Matthew 7:21-23

21 Not every one that saith unto me, **Lord, Lord**, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 **Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord**, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Notice these people in Matthew 21, called Jesus “Lord, Lord”. They even were active in the “church” – “have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” But the Lord says “in that day” – “**I never knew you: depart from me**, ye that work iniquity.” The glaring reason these people were lost was they were trying to “work” their way into heaven. **Notice what they said in verse 22 “... in thy name [in the name of Jesus Christ] done MANY WONDERFUL WORKS.** And Jesus replied, “I never knew you: depart from me that **WORK** iniquity.”

Wonderful works “in thy name” can not save a person, the Bible is very clear.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

It is **ONLY** through the blood of Jesus Christ that a person can be saved and born-again.

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 **But with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Romans 5:8-9

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, **being now justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

And let me add. . . these “depart from me” people in Matthew 7 were **NEVER** saved. It wasn’t that they were saved “church members” and later lost their salvation. **They were NEVER saved.** How do we know? Jesus Christ said in Matthew 7 “**I NEVER knew you**”. If they had been a “saved” before, Jesus could not have said “I NEVER know you.” **If they were saved before, He “previously” KNEW them.** Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, **and I KNOW them** and they follow me.”

The Spiritual Church - the Body and Bride of Christ.

As we documented, there is the “physical” church folks “assembling” in church buildings, store fronts and houses. But there is also in the scriptures a “spiritual” church. **And this is the most important one!** It’s comprised of **ONLY** truly, saved, born-again, children of God. No fakers here! The **ONLY** way to get in this “spiritual church” is to be spiritually-born again of the Spirit. It’s what Jesus Christ said in John 3

Acts 2:47

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

John 3:3-7

3 Jesus answered and said unto him. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he**

- 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?
 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again**.

In John, Jesus lists "two" births. The "water" birth is "that which is born of the flesh". A baby is born in water called the "amniotic sac" in the mother. When the "water breaks" a baby is born. Our natural birth - "that which is born of the flesh" that "born of water." It is not "water baptism" as taught by some. Baptism is not found in John 3.

Jesus makes it very plain in John 3:3, "**Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" In case missed, Jesus repeats it in verse 5. And in verse 7 Jesus, He left no wiggle room, "**Ye must be born again**".

How does one "be born again"?

A person gets "born again" of the Spirit by receiving Jesus Christ as their Saviour. John 1:12 reads, "**But as many as received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" We receive Lord Jesus by trusting and believing His shed blood on the cross to save us and "wash away our sins." Revelation 1:5 reads, "... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

When a person gets "born again" of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit at that instant, comes and dwells inside that "born-again" person! We are immediately "sealed" with the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-17

- 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; **for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you**.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, **and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

A person **immediately** receives the Holy Spirit when they trust and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That person is sealed with the Holy Spirit until the "day of redemption"! And nobody or nothing can "break that seal"! Praise the Lord!

John 7:38-39

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. **(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive:** for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in **whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise**,

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, **whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption**.

Romans 8:9 makes it clear, if you do NOT have the Spirit in you – you are NOT saved.

Romans 8:9

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

When a person gets "born again" by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes in and dwells in their body. That is when a person is placed into the "spiritual" church. This "spiritual" church is not an "organization" like the physical church, but an "organism" a "living" church. **It is referred to in the scriptures as the body of Christ. The Bible compares this "body" relationship of Christ and His church to that of a man and his wife. The "spiritual" church is also the Bride of Jesus Christ.**

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, **are one body: so also is Christ.**

13 **For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Note: 1 Corinthians 12:13 is not referring to “water baptism”, but “spiritual baptism”. The word “baptize” means to “immerse”. As we previously saw, when a person is “born again” they are Immersed or “baptized by the Holy Spirit,” and the Spirit dwells inside that person.

1 Corinthians 12:13 states when a person gets saved, they are baptized into ONE BODY by the Holy Spirit - “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . .” **According to the scriptures, that ONE BODY that “we are all baptized into” is the “spiritual” church. The ONE body in the Word of God is the church.**

Colossians 1:14-18, 24-26

14 In whom we have redemption **through his blood**, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 **And he is the head of the body, the church:** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

...

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh **for his body's sake, which is the church:**

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 **Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations**, but now is made manifest to his saints:

The relationship of Christ and His body – the church, is compared to the relationship to a man and his wife. Hence, the church is also the “bride of Christ.” Notice this relationship between Christ body and the church is a “**mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.**” **Like the husband, Christ is the HEAD of the Church. And like the WOMAN, the Church is the BODY of Christ. What a beautiful “marriage” relationship between Christ and His Church!**

Ephesians 5:23-32

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, **even as Christ is the head of the church:** and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, **even as Christ also loved the church**, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 **That he might present it to himself a glorious church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.** He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, **even as the Lord the church:**

30 **For we are members of his body**, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

Again, notice Paul, through the Holy Spirit writes concerning this “marriage” union as a “mystery”, “**This is a GREAT MYSTERY: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**”

An example of *the intimate relationship* between Christ and His church – His body – His Bride, occurs with Saul of Tarsus (later the Apostle Paul) on the road to Damascus:

Acts 9:1-5

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:** it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Saul was NOT *physically* persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ? Saul was persecuting “the church”! **But, according to the scriptures, when Saul was persecuting “the church”, he was also persecuting the spiritual “body” of Christ.** He was persecuting His Body – His Bride – His church. **“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?”**

Acts 8:3

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

1 Corinthians 15:9

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, **because I persecuted the church of God.**

It is the true “church”, the born-again people - His Bride that will be “be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” (1 Thess. 4:17)

Dwight Pentecost distinguishes between the “true church” and the “professing church” in the rapture of the church.

There is a distinction between the true church and the professing church. The true church is composed of all those in this age who have received Christ as Saviour. Over against this we have the professing church composed of those who make a profession of receiving Christ without actually receiving Him. **Only the true church will be raptured.** . . . These distinctions must be kept clearly in mind. **The rapture will remove, not all who make a profession of faith in Christ, but only those who have been born again and have received His life.**

(Dwight J. Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 199)

Since the church is “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” (Ephesians 5:30) and the Holy Spirit dwells inside a “born-again” believer and Hebrews 13:5 clearly says, “. . . for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**” If the Lord will NEVER leave us and the church goes through the Great Tribulation – guess what – **The Lord goes with us also!** Remember where we previously read when Paul persecuted the church, Jesus said in Acts 9:4, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?” When Saul was persecuting the church, he was persecuting the Lord Jesus! **And if the church is persecuted with the wrath of God in the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus would also have to be persecuted with the wrath of God during the Tribulation. God forbid! That will never happen!**

Dwight Pentecost provides a very informative and dreadful thought if the church, the Body of Christ, is subject to the wrath of the Great Tribulation:

Since the church is the body, of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1: 22; 5: 23; Col. 1: 18), the bride, of which He is the Bridegroom (1 Cor. 11: 2; Eph. 5: 23), the object of His love (Eph. 5: 25), the branch of which He is the Root and Stem (John 15: 5), the building, of which He is the Foundation and Cornerstone (1 Cor. 3: 9; Eph. 2: 19-22), **there exists between the believer and the Lord a union and a unity.** The believer is no longer separated from Him, but brought into the closest oneness with Him. If the church is in the seventieth week [the great tribulation], she is subjected to the wrath, judgment, and indignation which characterizes the period, **and because of her oneness with Christ, He, likewise, would be subjected to that same visitation. This is impossible according to 1 John 4: 17, for He can not be brought into judgment again.**

(Dwight J. Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 199)

Revelation 13:7 makes it clear that all who are in the seventieth week [the Great Tribulation] are brought into subjection to the Beast and through him to Satan, who gives the Beast His power. **If the church were in this period she would be subjected to Satan, and Christ would either lose His place as Head, or He, Himself, because of His union with the Church, would be likewise subjected to Satan’s authority. Such a thing is unthinkable. Thus it is concluded that the nature of the church and the completeness of her salvation prevent her from being in the seventieth week [the Great Tribulation].**

(Dwight J. Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 199)

There is not the slightest chance at all that any part of Christ's Body will be on this earth during Daniel's Seventieth Week [Tribulation], for the "Body" has business in heaven: being judged (2 Cor. 5:10) and having its "spots" and "wrinkles" cleansed and ironed to be presented to Christ as a "Glorious" church. (Eph. 5:27)
(Peter S. Ruckman, *The Rapture*, p. 8)

Revelation 4:1-3

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 records exclusively of the church age comprised of the seven churches. In Revelation 4: church disappears from the book of Revelation (and the Great Tribulation) with the trumpet call of “come up hither”. **Who guess who reappears in Revelation 19? The “married” church - the beautiful bride of Christ! Hallelujah!**

Revelation 19:11-16

In the book of Revelation, two times “heaven is opened”. In the first case; someone “comes up hither” (Rev. 4:1). In the other case someone “comes down” (Rev. 19). **And guess what? The same group that goes “up” in Revelation 4, the same group that comes “down” in Revelation! In Revelation 4, the church goes “up” – and in Revelation the church, the Bride, now Christ’s Wife, comes “back” with her Husband!**

Revelation 19:7

Who is the Bridegroom Lamb?

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Rev. 17:14 identifies the Lamb: “These shall make with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: **for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings**: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” **Revelation 19:13, reads “his name name is called The Word of God. (see John 1:1).** 16 Revelation 19:16 says, He has a name written “**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**”

Normally during a wedding all the eyes are on the beautiful Bride. When the “Wedding March” plays, all the guests stare and every eye is upon the lovely Bride as she walks down the aisle to meet her Bridegroom. But not this wedding in Revelation 19. The attention of this wedding is on the Bridegroom – the Lamb of God!

We find several instances in the scriptures where the Lord Jesus is identified as the bridegroom.

Matthew 9:14-15

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the **bridegroom is with them?** but the days will come, **when the bridegroom shall be taken from them**, and then shall they fast.

John the Baptist identifies the Bridegroom as the Christ in John 3:

John 3:28-30

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom**: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Who is the Bride?

John declares in verse 29, “**He that hath THE BRIDE is the bridegroom**”. **Every BRIDEgroom MUST have a BRIDE**. We previously identified the Church as the “Bride” of Christ. We shall now “drill a little deeper” at the Bride during her Marriage of the Lamb in Revelation 19.

In Ephesians 5, the Word of God compares the church and Christ, as the same relationship as a man and his wife.

Ephesians 5:23-32

23 **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, **even as Christ also loved the church**, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 **That he might present it to himself a glorious church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 **So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies**. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, **even as the Lord the church**:

30 **For we are members of his body**, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:2, reminds the “church” she is “espoused” to her husband – Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: **for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**

The word “espoused” means “to take as a spouse, to marry, to wed”. The root word “spouse” means “married person, husband or wife”. The Bible in Luke 2:5, says of Joseph and the birth of Christ, “To be taxed with Mary **his espoused** being great with child.”

According to 2 Corinthians 11:2, **The church right now is “ESPOUSED to one HUSBAND ... CHRIST”**. The Bride and Bridegroom are now waiting on the Marriage. The Marriage takes place in heaven while the Great Tribulation is occurring on the earth. We know that because the Lamb and His wife are married at the Second Coming in Revelation 19. **The**

church is no longer espoused to Christ in Revelation 19:7. She is now His wife - "His wife hath made herself ready".

Revelation 19:7

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: **for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** And he saith unto me, **These are the true sayings of God.**

Revelation 19:7 has an interesting wording, "**his wife hath made herself READY.**" **How and when did His wife "make herself ready"? The Word of God tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that every born-again person, "appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body".** 1 Corinthians 3 provides further detail into the judgment seat of Christ: "every man's work. . . shall be revealed by fire". It is at the Judgment Seat of Christ that His wife "makes herself ready". At the Judgment Seat of Christ the church (a.k.a. the Bride) shall be purified and "made ready" by fire. All the "wood, hay, and stubble" shall burn, but the "gold, silver and precious stones" shall abide.

Like every "pure" beautiful, "virgin" wife (**2 Cor 11:2 "I may PRESENT YOU as a chaste VIRGIN to CHRIST"**) the Bride dresses in pure white. Revelation 19:8 writes about His wife. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in **fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**" Notice this is NOT the righteousness of Christ as found in Romans 5:21, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 2 Peter 1:1, et. al. but this is "the righteousness of saints." The "righteousness of saints" can not happen until after "the saints" (aka. His wife, the church) have been purified by fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ. At our present state, according to Isaiah 64:6, "all our righteousness are as filthy rags". The ONLY way to "purify" the church is the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is no other scriptural solution. AFTER the Judgment Seat of Christ our righteousness will be "fine linen, clean and white". Praise the Lord! After that His "virgin" wife "will be ready" for the marriage of the Lamb.

In the scriptural comparison of Christ and His church to the marriage of a man and his wife, Ephesians 5:27, of the "marriage presentation" (Rev 19:7) of His wife – the church - "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." *Compare scripture with scripture* - the only scriptural explanation for the church to be PRESENTED "**not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish**" **MUST be the cleansing at the Judgment Seat of Christ BEFORE the "marriage presentation".**

Ephesians 5:25-29

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

The following verses reference the Judgment Seat of Christ:

Romans 14:10

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? **for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The following Bible teachers provide some enlightening commentary concerning the Bride at the Marriage of the Lamb:

We are told in verse 7 [Revelation 19:7], that she hath "made herself ready," and in verse 8, that it was permitted her to be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; which is the righteousness of saints," . . . Where does the Church thus clothe herself and when? **It is certain that she does not thus clothe herself on**

been tried at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where all her "false works" will have been consumed by fire (1. Cor. 3:11-15). . . The "righteousness" then of the Saints will be their righteous acts and works that will come out of the "fiery test" of the Judgment of Reward. . . and be found unto PRAISE and HONOR and GLORY at the "APPEARING" of Jesus Christ; and these shall make up the beautiful wedding garments in which the Saints shall be clothed.
(Clarence Larkin. *The Book of Revelation*, p. 168)

Here the "Marriage of the Lamb" is taking place. . . **It means that the Judgment Seat of Christ is over by the end of the Tribulation**, for we read: Revelation 19:7—"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY." **The "Bride of Christ" is now ready for the marriage. To "be ready" she has to be without "spot, or wrinkle"—"a glorious Church" (Eph. 5:27). This is done by the purging and cleansing that will take place at the "Judgment Seat of Christ" (1 Cor. 3:10–16, 2 Cor. 5:10–11, Rom .14:10–12).** These passages make it abundantly clear that after the Rapture of the Church (the "Bride," the "Body of Christ"; she has to be part of Christ's body as Eve was part of Adam's body), the Church is going to be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Her works are burned out and purified; she is made "spotless" and "without blemish or wrinkle." Then she is married to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this present dispensation, she is espoused to Him as a "chaste virgin" (2 Cor. 11:1–3). The marriage takes place in heaven immediately preceding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Peter S. Ruckman, Jr. *Revelation Commentary*, p. 492)

The time of the marriage is revealed in Scripture as falling between the translation of the church [rapture] and the second advent. Prior to the rapture the church is still anticipating this union. According to Revelation 19: 7 this marriage has taken place at the time of the second advent, for the declaration is: "the marriage of the Lamb is come." **This marriage is seen to follow the events of the bema [Judgment Seat] of Christ, inasmuch as when the wife appears she appears in the "righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 19: 8), which can only refer to those things that have been accepted at the judgment seat of Christ.** Thus the marriage itself must be placed between the judgment seat of Christ and the second advent. The place of the marriage can only be in heaven. Inasmuch as this follows the judgment seat of Christ, which has been shown to be in the heavenlies, and it is from the air the church comes when the Lord returns (Rev. 19: 14), the marriage must take place in heaven. No other location would fit a heavenly people (Phil. 3: 20).
(Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 226)

Note: The Judgment Seat of Christ is only for the born-again, saved, body of Christ. The unsaved people are judged at Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. This occurs after the 1000 year Millennial Reign of Christ on this earth after the Second Coming of Revelation 19. At the Great White Judgment the unsaved are judged "cast into the lake of fire" for ever and ever. **My friend, you do not want to be judged at the Great White Judgment. And the Lord does not want you there either!** 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**" **Have you ever been born again?**

Revelation 20:11

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Let me add some common sense "food for thought"; Every Bible reading, Christian realizes Jesus Christ is coming back in Revelation 19 – Amen! And every Bible reading, Christian realizes His wife, the church is coming back in Revelation 19 with Him – Amen!. And every HONEST Bible reading, Christian KNOWS that if His wife; the church, comes DOWN FROM HEAVEN with Christ – "the church" MUST somehow went up to heaven BEFORE Christ and His wife came down from heaven. So the very simple question is – how and when did "the church" go up to heaven to marry the Lord? **And the simple answer is – the church MUST be "caught up" or raptured into heaven BEFORE Revelation 19! Amen!** Hence; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; John 14:1-3; Revelation 4:1-2. **It could NOT possibly be a plainer!**

pain is so horrible “they gnawed their tongues for pain,” (Rev 16:10) **Does anyone who is reading this REALLY believe the Lord Jesus Christ will ALLOW His wife to go through the suffering of the Great Tribulation? If you do – you don’t KNOW the Lord Jesus Christ!**

Tim LaHaye in *Rapture Under Attack*, writes “I simply cannot imagine the heavenly Bridegroom whispering these words to His chosen one:”

“Yes, My bride, My precious one, I loved you so much that I gave My life for you. I want to nourish and cherish you. I want to take you home with Me and celebrate our marriage with joy and singing and feasting. I want to be with you forever. **But before I bring you Home, I want You to experience seven years of the very fury of hell and seven years of the terrible wrath of My Father. But try not to worry, I’ll come back for you when it’s all over.**”
(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 63)

THE WORK AFTER THE RAPTURE

After the Rapture of the church the work of the Lord takes a completely different turn. One prophesied and promised throughout the scripture.

The Resurrection of the Nation of Israel...

We have now seen the Disappearance (the Rapture) and the Reappearance (Marriage at the Second Coming) of the church. We now come to another “key” to “unlock” the PURPOSE of the Great Tribulation. **In fact, this is “THE KEY” that unlocks the Rapture and the Tribulation.**

Something many ignore about the Great Tribulation is the PURPOSE of the Tribulation. Everything the Lord does has a DIVINE PURPOSE. Isaiah 14:24 reads, “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” We saw earlier the Tribulation contains the “WRATH of God”. The purpose of the Tribulation was never about the church. The Lord told the church in 1 Thess, 1;10: “to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, **which delivered us from the wrath to come.** If the church is “delivered from the WRATH to come” BEFORE the Tribulation, then the Tribulation’s PURPOSE is not for the church. **understand the reason and recipients of the Tribulation we must first understand the PURPOSE.**

The Bible provides us with “THE KEY” to study and understand the scriptures. 2 Timothy admonishes us to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed”. **And the last half of the verse informs us - “RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of truth.** Every cult and false religion, from the Jehovah Witness, Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventist, Church of Christ, et. al. all have ONE THING in common – They DO NOT “RIGHTLY DIVIDE the Word of God. Every one of these false religions are based on TRUTH. The problem is the TRUTH is *misapplied* for the wrong time, the wrong place or the wrong people.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

There are many “RIGHTLY DIVIDING” keys in the Word of Truth. There are seven dispensations, or different time periods, that the Lord “dispenses” His commands and dealings with mankind. The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3:2: “the dispensation of the grace of God” was given to him to give to the world.

Ephesians 3:2

If ye have heard of **the dispensation of the grace of God** which is given me to you-ward:

There is “RIGHTLY DIVIDING” of the flesh and spirit. Galatians 5:17 reads “**For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other:** so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” There is the DIVIDING of faith and works; standing and state; saved and lost. There are scores of DIVIDING the Word of God. The KEY to understanding the scriptures and keeping everything straight is “RIGHTLY DIVIDING” the Word of Truth.

Interesting side note to 2 Timothy 2:15 and the command to “study” and “rightly dividing the word of truth”. **EVERY New Version (or PERversions) remove the word “STUDY” and remove the instruction to “RIGHTLY DIVIDING” the word of truth. Wow!** The ONLY verse in the Bible that encourages you to study the scriptures, and the New Versions remove the word “study”. And the ONLY verse in the Bible that instructs you HOW to study your Bible and the New Versions remove the “rightly dividing”

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

The following are a few examples of some of the most popular PERversions and their assault on 2 Timothy 2

2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 HCSB

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 MSG

Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won't be ashamed of, laying out the truth plain and simple.

2 Timothy 2:15 NIV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 NLT

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive His approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 NRSV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

Any wonder people have such a hard time understanding the scriptures when the New PERversions remove the ONLY instructions on WHY and HOW to study the Word of truth!

One of the major "RIGHTLY DIVIDING" keys is the Church and Israel. The Old Testament deals with Israel. Most of the New Testament deals with the Church. The Lord God deals with Israel as a Nation. They are His chosen people. They are His chosen Nation. **The Lord God chose Israel "to be a SPECIAL PEOPLE unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."**

Deuteronomy 7:6

For thou art an **HOLY PEOPLE** unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a **SPECIAL PEOPLE** unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 26:18-19

18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to **be his peculiar people**, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;

19 **And to make thee high ABOVE ALL NATIONS** which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be **an holy people** unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

Exodus 19:5-6

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a **peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, **and an HOLY NATION**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Psalms 135:4

For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

Make no mistake, Israel and the Jewish people are VERY special to the Lord. The Lord says they are **"the apple of his eye"**

Deuteronomy 32:9-10

9 For the LORD'S portion is his people; **Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.**

10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed

May I remind you. . . Jacob is also the name for Israel.

Genesis 35:10

And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, **but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.**

God does not deal with Israel as He deals with the Church. They are two separate entities in the scriptures. One of the **KEYS** in understanding the **PURPOSE** of the Tribulation and Prophecy is to **"RIGHTLY DIVIDE"** the Church and Israel. Once you understand the **"RIGHTLY DIVIDING"** – the rest is easy.

Several well-known prophecy teachers reiterate this "KEY":

In fact, separating Israel and the church is one of the MAJOR KEYS to rightly understanding Bible prophecy. The second key is taking the prophetic scriptures literally whenever possible.
(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 44)

The confusion of Israel and the church is one of the major reasons for confusion in prophecy as a whole.
(John Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation*, p. 160)

In Jeremiah 30:3, one of the greatest promises and prophecies in all the scriptures is found. In Jeremiah 30:3, Lord promises, He will cause His people Israel "to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." **This is an amazing prophecy and promise!** In 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar "besieged" and "captured" Israel. Daniel 1 reads, "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it." **In 606 BC, the nation of Israel ceased to exist. They were scattered over the earth.**

But the Lord promised in Jeremiah 30:3: **"For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, . . ."** He will again **FREE** his people, and not only that – **"I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."** Many Bible teachers and commentators, for **hundreds of years, did not believe Jeremiah 30:3 would literally ever happen.** Israel would **NOT** "return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Israel had not been a nation since Nebuchadnezzar captured it in 606 BC. Israel and the Jews were scattered all over the globe. They were literally a people without a land. Many Bible commentators did not believe the promises were literal that Israel would again possess the land. With no way to ignore the **hundreds of promises in the Old Testament to Israel**, they "perverted" the Word of God and "claimed" the promises were "spiritual" promises for the church. **Nothing could be further from the truth!**

A classic example of "robbing" Israel from the promises and prophecies of the Word of God is the famous *Thomas-Chain Reference Bible*. The notes on the heading of Isaiah chapter 43, the *Thomas-Chain Reference Bible*, reads, "The Lord comforts **the church** with his promises". **The Word of God in Isaiah 43, plainly directs His promises to Israel:**

Isaiah 43:1-3

- 1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, **O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.**
- 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
- 3 **For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:** I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

The *Thomas-Chain Reference Bible* "robs" the promises of Israel in many places in his scripture notes. Obviously, I do not recommend *The Thomas-Chain Reference Bible*. Dr. Frank Charles Thompson, the author of *Thomas-Chain Reference Bible*, is also Amillennial in his prophetic view.

Even though many Bible commentators did not believe the promises to Israel were literal. And even though many Bible teachers taught that Israel would never possess their land again. And even though, many Christians believed the "literal" promises to Israel were really "spiritual" promises to the church – **the Lord God throughout the scriptures promises His people, the Jews would again possess THEIR LAND!**

And the Lord ALWAYS keeps His promises!

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: **hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?**

Just as the Lord promised, the greatest miracle in the scriptures, besides the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ, occurred on May 14, 1948. Against all odds, against many Bible teachers, against many countries and leaders, on May 14, 1948, God honored His promise to Israel. **On that glorious day in history, the miracle of the rebirth of the nation of Israel occurred! And the prophetic words of Jeremiah 30:3 rang "loud and true".**

Jeremiah 30:3

For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: **and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.**

In Isaiah 43:5-6, the Lord God prophesizes and promises that He will bring thy seed of Israel from the EAST, the WEST, the NORTH and the SOUTH...

Isaiah 43:5-6

5 Fear not: for I am with thee: **I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;**
6 **I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;**

As soon as the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, the Lord began "bringing" the chosen Jewish "SEED" from all over the world. As the scriptures foretold, they came from the east, the west, the north and the south. **As He promised - God was bringing His chosen people home!**

"I will bring thy seed from the east"

Before 1948, 87% of the Jews who returned to Palestine came from European countries, with only 10% from Oriental countries. During the first year and a half of Israel, 37% of the Jews from the Orient came, and by 1953 the percentage had reached 50% that came from East.

"and gather thee from the west;"

There was a virtual stampede from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Europe, The United States and the Latin American countries.

"I will say to the north, Give up"

The Jews came from every nation in Europe. Czechoslovakia permitted 30,000 of its surviving Jews to depart. Over 30,000 came from Turkey, 36,000 from Bulgaria. More than half of the Jews in Yugoslavia returned.

and to the south, Keep not back

Hundreds of thousands of Jews were living in the southland of the Arabs. Over 900,000 Jews dwelt in Arab lands before the rebirth of Israel. Today less than 40,000 live in the Arab world. They came back home.

The greatest migration in the history of the world took place as the Lord promised.

Read this! Before 1880, there was NOT ONE Jew in the land of Palestine.

In 1914, there was 90,000 in Palestine.

In 1948, there was 650,000 Jews in Israel.

In 1965, there was 2.2 Jews in Israel.

In 1976, there was 3.5 Jews in Israel.

And Today there are over 6,419,000 Jews in Israel!

Before 1948, many Christians, historians, countries, politician, religions and the media had "written off" the nation of Israel. But the Lord God "written it down" thousands of years ago He would bring them back into their promised land. And Praise the Lord – He did!

Jeremiah 31 has ONE of the GREATEST PROMISES in all the Word of God! The Lord promised as long as the sun, the moon and the stars – there will be a nation of Israel! Praise the Lord! For Israel to "cease to exist" "those ordinances" of heaven would have to depart!

Jeremiah 31:35-37

35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, **then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.**

One of the great proofs of the inspiration of the Word of God is the Jewish people. They have been persecuted and attacked like no other people in history. Hitler's reign of terror murder over 6 million. Jerusalem has been besieged 46 times and completely destroyed to the ground 17 times. **And yet that tiny nation is the centerpiece of the world!**

Psalms 83:4

They have said, **Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.**

The Miracle of the Jews.

In the mid 1700s, the King of Sweden challenged the bishop of the Moravian Church, Count von Zinzendorf, to prove Bible was the words of God. The King granted Zinzendorf 10 hours to present the evidence. When Zinzendorf "presented the evidence", he told the King he didn't need 10 hours, or even 10 words to prove the Bible was the Word of God. **Alone he needed was one word – "JEWS".**

Ezekiel 37:28

And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, . . .

The 39 books of the Old Testament details the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. It describes their birth, their lineage, their history, their struggles, their failures, their tears, their wars and their victories. It contains thousands of prophecies and promises to the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. Unfortunately, too many Christians, dwelling completely on the New Testament and the "church age" neglect the importance of the Jewish people. Romans 3:2 tells us that unto the Jews "were committed the oracles of God." **Jesus Christ says in John 4:22, "for salvation is of the Jews."**

One of the reasons that many do not understand and deny the evidence for "rapture of the church" is they neglect the prophetic promises to the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

Make no mistake, God is NOT finished with the Jewish people and the Nation of Israel. Romans 11:1 asks: **"Has God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."**

Romans 11:25 contains one of the greatest New Testament end-time analysis of Israel and the church. **It provides the foundation for the PURPOSE of the tribulation.**

Romans 11:25

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of **this mystery**, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; **that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**

The apostle Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reminds us NOT "to be ignorant of THIS MYSTERY". **And here's the MYSTERY – "that blindness in part is happened to Israel".** The current state of Israel is "spiritual" blindness. They rejected their Messiah. In Mark 15:12, Pilate asked the Jews "What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" **You know their answer – "And they cried out again, Crucify him."**

Mark 15:12-14

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, **What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?**

13 And they cried out again, **Crucify him.**

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? **And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.**

John 1:11 reads: "He came unto his own [the Jews], and his own received him not.

Because of their denial and crucifixion of their Messiah the Lord Jesus, "blindness in part is happened unto Israel". But God is NOT finished with Israel. Notice the last part of Romans 11:25 – **"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."** The FULNESS of the Gentiles is "the completion of the FULL church". The FULNESS began at Pentecost and ends at the rapture. At that point, the church is FULL. The "church age" of the Gentiles is FULFILLED.

The fullness of the Gentiles began at Pentecost and will continue only as long as the present age of grace. . . , **it seems clear that the fullness of the Gentiles will come abruptly to its close with the church is caught up to heaven.**

(John F. Walvoord, "Israel's Blindness", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 102:287-88, July, 1945)

The "Fulness of the Gentiles" refers to the Gentiles that are "gathered out" to make up the Church, and "blindness in part" will continue among the Jews until the "Fulness" (the whole number of the elect) of the Gentiles be come in. then the Church is "caught out." [rapture] and the Jews restored to their own land.

The "Fulness of the Gentiles" began at Pentecost, and ends at least seven years [Tribulation] before the "Times of the Gentiles" end.

(Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, p. 67)

Now, here are the facts concerning God's dealing with Israel in this passage. 1) Israel is blind, spiritually, as a nation—but only partly. There are still Jews receiving Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, as their Saviour. 2) **The "fulness of the Gentiles" is about to come to an end. The Rapture will fulfill the Body of Christ.**

(Peter S. Ruckman, *Romans Commentary*)

'The fullness of the Gentiles' refers to the completion of the purpose of Almighty God in this Dispensation of Grace-or, the Church Age-when He is calling out from among the Gentiles a people for His name. . . the Church, which is His body. **When the Church is complete and caught out of this earth to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, God will turn again to Israel;** and when they see Jesus whom they pierced, they will accept Him, a nation will be born in a day, and God will save His people, Israel.

(Oliver B. Greene, *Romans Commentary*, p. 399)

After "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"; the rapture occurs and at some point, the tribulation begins. After the rapture, the church no longer demands the Lord's attention on this earth. **God's attention turns to the Jews and Israel.** Where the Lord God left off at Malachi 4 in the Old Testament, Revelation 4-18, picks up. An even casual study of Revelation, plainly reveals that after Revelation 4 and the removal of the church, the topic that dominates the Great Tribulation is the Jews and Israel. **Nothing could be clearer. . .**

Gerald Stanton narrates the overwhelming Jewish influence of the Tribulation:

The tribulation is primarily Jewish. This fact is borne out by Old Testament Scriptures (Deut 4: 30; Jer. 30: 7; Ezek. 20: 37; Dan. 12: 1; Zech. 13: 8-9), by the Olivet Discourse of Christ (Matt. 24: 9-26), and by the book of Revelation itself (Rev. 7: 4-8; 12: 1-2; 17, etc.). It concerns "Daniel's people," the coming of "false Messiah," the preaching of the "gospel of the kingdom," flight on the "sabbath," the temple and the "holy place," the land of Judea, the city of Jerusalem, the twelve "tribes of the children of Israel," the "song of Moses," "signs" in the heavens, the "covenant" with the Beast, the "sanctuary," the "sacrifice and the oblation" of the temple ritual— **these all speak of Israel and prove that the tribulation is largely a time when God deals with His ancient people prior to their entrance into the promised kingdom.** The many Old Testament prophecies yet to be fulfilled for Israel further indicate a future time when God will deal with this nation (Deut. 30: 1-6; Jer. 30: 8-10, etc.)

(Gerald Stanton, *Kept From the Hour*, pp.30-31)

The following documentation from respected Bible commentators support the significance of Israel during the Tribulation:

There can be no question that this period [Tribulation] will see the wrath of God poured out upon the whole earth. Revelation 3: 10; Isaiah 34: 2; 24: 1, 4-5, 16-17, 18-21, and many other passages make this very clear. **And yet, while the whole earth is in view, this period is particularly in relation to Israel.**

Jeremiah 30: 7, which calls this period "the time of Jacob's trouble," makes this certain.

(Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 195)

The first great purpose of the tribulation is to prepare the nation Israel for her Messiah. The prophecy of Jeremiah (30: 7) makes it clear that this time that is coming has particular reference to Israel, for it is "the time of Jacob's trouble."

(Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 237)

But the Scriptures give a vast distinction between God's dealing with the church **and the time of the Tribulation which seems to be a resumption of God's dealing with Israel. During the Tribulation the spotlight is on the Jew** – in the Book of Revelation the Jew is responsible for evangelizing the world again, (Revelation 7:1-4).

(Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 142)

The Great Tribulation has nothing to do with the church. **The Scriptures which describe the Great Tribulation speak of Israel (Jacob), and the church is not once named.**

(Oliver B. Greene, *Bible Prophecy*, p. 187)

The Tribulation is one of the most significant periods of God's dealing with humankind and certainly occupies a most prominent place in His prophetic plan. **More space is dedicated to that little seven-year period than any other comparable time frame in the Bible.** It is mentioned over fifty times in the Old Testament by such expressions as 'the day of calamity,' 'day of wrath,' 'the day of the Lord's wrath,'

'the day of Jacob's trouble,' 'the day of vengeance of our God,' 'time of trouble,' and 'the day of the LORD.' **In every case it is talking about the nation of Israel. . .**
To understand the Tribulation period as described in the book of Revelation, one should understand that it is a very special day in God's plan for His nation, Israel.
 (Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled*, p. 132)

Let us "search the scriptures. . . whether these things are so".

As we earlier examined the church's *complete* absence in the book of Revelation AFTER the "come up hither" of Revelation 4:1. The church does not appear again until Revelation 19 as the Bride. **The book of the Revelation after chapter 6, which is the actual beginning of the Great Tribulation period distinctly turns it's attention to the Jews and Israel**

Previously we saw in Jeremiah 30:3, where the Lord promised and prophesized the return of Israel to their land, which happened in 1948. Jeremiah 30:7 also prophesies of the Great Tribulation: **"Alas! for that day is GREAT, so that none like it: it is even the time of JACOB'S TROUBLE;** but he shall be saved out of it." The phrase for "THAT DAY" is generally nearly always refers to the day of the Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ. In Matthew 24:21 when Jesus Christ describes the "GREAT tribulation": **"For then shall be GREAT tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"** the Lord obviously references Jeremiah 30:7; **"Alas! for that day is GREAT, so that none like it: it is even the time of JACOB'S TROUBLE; SO THAT NONE IS LIKE IT:"**

If the Great Tribulation is truly the "time of Jacob's troubles" that should be easy to "prove" by simply reading and reviewing the Tribulation period in Revelation. We should see CLEAR evidence of the Jews and Israel influence in Revelation. In Matthew 24:15, the Lord Jesus gives us the simple instruction, **"whoso readeth, let him understand:"**

Matthew 24:15

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, **(whoso readeth, let him understand:)**

Let us now open the book of Revelation and "READ and UNDERSTAND".

The Great Tribulation begins in chapter 6. It doesn't take long before Israel and the Jews appear. Revelation chapter 7 begins with the sealing of "the servants of our God in their foreheads." These "sealed servants" are "144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel". Many false cults such as the Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventist have claimed to be the 144,000 "witnesses". **But these are not "spiritual" Jews. The scriptures are VERY clear. These are "natural" Jews from each of 12 tribes of Israel.**

Revelation 7:3-8

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, **till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all **the tribes of the children of Israel.**

5 Of the **tribe of Juda** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Reuben** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Gad** were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the **tribe of Aser** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Nephtalim** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Manasses** were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the **tribe of Simeon** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Levi** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Issachar** were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the **tribe of Zabulon** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Joseph** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the **tribe of Benjamin** were sealed twelve thousand.

In Revelation 11, we have the Jewish reference to "the temple of God". This "temple" is the rebuilt Jewish temple on the earth. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says the antichrist during the Tribulation "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." So we know the Jewish temple must be rebuilt during the Tribulation. Notice in Revelation 11:2, "the court which is WITHOUT the temple. . . is given to the GENTILES". The GENTILES are not allowed in the Jewish temple, but WITHOUT in the court. **This is completely different than the teaching of the "inclusive" New Testament church.** Romans 10:11-12 read **"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."** 1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, **whether we be Jews or Gentiles**, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." **Clearly, we see the unique focus of the JEWISH TEMPLE. Again, this is not New Testament "inclusive church" doctrine.**

- 1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and **measure the temple of God**, and the altar, and them that worship therein.
- 2 **But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles:** and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Revelation 11 continues with "MY two witnesses". Again, we see the Jewish reference as the phrase "the two OLIVE trees". **The official Emblem of the State of Israel is a menorah with TWO OLIVE branches standing on each side. There has been much discussion attempting to identify the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11. But simply obey the Lord's command** In Matthew 24:15, "**whoso readeth, let him understand**" and comparing "scripture with scripture", their identities are very easy to determine.

Revelation 11:3-4

- 3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.
- 4 **These are the two olive trees**, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

The scriptures gives us several specific and unmistakable characteristics of these two witnesses. Based upon the scriptures, their identification should not be difficult. Clarence Larkin writes in his *Revelation Commentary* (p. 84) concerning the two witnesses, "**It is very easy to identify them**". Let us examine some of their characteristics in Revelation 11:

Revelation 11:

- 3: **And I will give power unto my two witnesses**,
 3: and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days"
 5: "fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies:"
 6: "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:"
 6: "have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues,"

Are there TWO prophets in the scriptures that match these distinct characteristics? Based on scripture these two witnesses can ONLY be Moses and Elijah. Let's examine the evidence from the scriptures:

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses,

Moses and Elijah are two of the most POWERFUL witnesses in the scriptures.

Revelation 11:3 and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days"

A thousand two hundred and threescore days (1260 days = 3 years and 6 months)
 Elijah prayed and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of **three years and six months**.

Revelation 11:5 "fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies:"

in 2 Kings 1, Elijah called fire down from heaven, with his mouth, two times and devoured his enemies. In Numbers 16, fire from the Lord devoured the enemies of Moses.

2 Kings 1:10

And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, **If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.**

Numbers 16:35

And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

Revelation 11:6 "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:"

Of course, Elijah shut heaven for 3 and a half years.

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: **and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.**

Moses in the scriptures had power “over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues (Exodus 8-10)”.

Exodus 7:20

And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; **and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.**

IMPORTANT POINT: There is NO record in Revelation during the Tribulation of “my two witnesses” performing the *described* acts in Revelation 11:3-6; “fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies” or “having power to shut heaven and it rain not”, or “turning water into blood” or “smiting the earth with plagues”. **So these acts mentioned in Revelation MUST be identifying attributes of “my two witnesses”. These acts MUST have occurred somewhere else in the scriptures.** And the ONLY two prophets that performed these acts were Moses and Elijah. There’s no other reason for the Lord to include the descriptive acts in Revelation 11. Not a single word in the scriptures is coincidental just “filling space”. There is a REASON for Revelation 11:3-6.

The Mount of Transfiguration

In Matthew 17 it was also Moses and Elijah that appeared with Jesus Christ at the “mount of transfiguration”. This was a beautiful picture of the future millennial reign of Christ. Notice: like the millennial; “a high mountain”, Jesus was “transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” Peter wanted to build three tabernacles – the Feast of Tabernacles is symbolic of the millennial reign.

Matthew 17:1-4

- 1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,
- 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.
- 3 **And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.**
- 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

The Last Words of the Last Book

But the overwhelming evidence that “proves” that Elijah and Moses are the two witnesses in Revelation 11 is Malachi 4, which contains the LAST words of the Old Testament and a prophetic reference to the Second Coming of Christ. Notice the “Sun of righteousness” in verse 2, which matches Matthew 17:2, “his face did shine as the SUN”. The LAST two people mentioned in the Old Testament are Moses and Elijah. And the context of Malachi 4 is the Second Coming of Christ. **Could it be any clearer that the “my two witnesses” are Moses and Elijah?**

Malachi 4:1-6

- 1 **For, behold, the day cometh**, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
- 2 But unto you that fear my name shall **the Sun of righteousness** arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.
- 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.
- 4 **Remember ye the law of Moses my servant**, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.
- 5 **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:**
- 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Who are these “TWO WITNESSES”? They are men: not systems, or churches, or a body of witnesses, for they prophesy and are clothed in sackcloth, neither of which can be said of other than persons, and there are TWO of them. **It is very easy to identify them.** They have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the DAYS OF THEIR PROPHECY. This can refer to no other than Elijah, who had power in the days of King Ahab to shut up the heavens for the space of three years and six months (1. Kings 17:1. Luke 4:25. James 5:17), and this is the same length of time, 42 months, or 1260 days, or 3½ years, that these “TWO WITNESSES” are to prophesy. Then we know that Elijah was translated, and did not see death, that he might come back before “THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD” for the purpose of “turning

the heart of the children to their fathers," and this is the purpose of the prophesying of these "TWO WITNESSES." Mal. 4:5-6. It is clear from the time that the Prophet Malachi said that Elijah would come again, JUST BEFORE "The Great And Dreadful Day Of The Lord," that this prophecy was not fulfilled in John the Baptist. He announced the "First Coming" of Christ, but no "Great And Dreadful Day Of The Lord" followed. That event is yet future, and follows the testimony of these "TWO WITNESSES."

If we study carefully what shall happen during the period the "TWO WITNESSES" shall testify, which as we have seen will be the last half of the "Week," or 3½ years, we shall see that the "TWO WITNESSES" can be no other than MOSES and ELIJAH.

(Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, pp. 84, 86)

Beyond any shadow of a doubt these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah. Both are the last two men mentioned in the Old testament in connection with the Second Advent (Mal. 4:5), and both appeared with Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, which was a picture of the Second Advent (Matt. 16:28-17:5, 2 Pet. 1:16-18). Moreover the description of their works in verses 5-6 are exactly what Moses and Elijah did in their ministries. Both destroyed their enemies by fire when they spoke (Num. 16:28-35, 2 Kings 1:10-14). Elijah stopped the rain for three and a half years (James 5:17), and Moses turned water to blood (Exod. 7:20) and called down plagues on a type of the Antichrist (Exod. 8-10). If that weren't enough, both are said to have stood "before the God of the earth" (Exod. 33:20-23; 1 Kings 17:1). Enoch doesn't meet any of those qualifications.

(Peter S. Ruckman, *Ruckman Reference Bible*, Revelation 11:3)

The Woman in Revelation 12

In Revelation 12 we find more evidence proving Israel's major role in the Tribulation. In fact, Revelation 12 is probably the most obvious proof of Israel's relevance during the Tribulation. Revelation 12 is also one of the most disputed chapters in Revelation. Revelation 12 describes three major characters: 1) "a woman" that brings forth a man child; 2) a "man child" that will rule all nations; 3) a "great red dragon" that attempts to devour the "man child" as it is born.

The Bible reveals the identity of two of the characters in Revelation 12:

1. The great red dragon is Satan or the Devil. Revelation 12:9 says "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, **called the Devil, and Satan.** . ."

2. The man child is the incarnate, birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:5 says And she brought forth a man child, **who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:** and her child was caught up unto God, **and to his throne. There is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.** In Revelation 19:15, at the Second Coming of Christ, it reads, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, **that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:** and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (see also Psalms 2:9, Rev. 2:27)

3. The controversy is this WOMAN. We know the man child is Jesus. Roman Catholicism claims she is Mary since she gave birth to Jesus. Of course this won't fly because Revelation 12:14 says "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, **where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.**" Mary was never nourished in the wilderness for 3 and half years from the devil. Many protestants claim the woman is the church. The church did not birth the Lord Jesus, but Jesus birthed the church. **The identity of the woman in Revelation 12 is a major "key" to unlock the book of Revelation.**

Harry Ironside emphasizes the significance to the identity of the "woman" in Revelation 12:

I think I may say without exaggeration that I have read or carefully examined several hundred books purporting to expound the Revelation. **I have learned to look upon this twelfth chapter as the crucial test in regard to the correct prophetic outline.** If the interpreters are wrong as to the woman and the man-child, it necessarily follows that they will be wrong as to many things connected with them. (Harry Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, pp. 203-204)

J. Vernon McGee echoes Dr. Ironside's priority to the "woman" in Revelation 12:

We come now to the crux of the interpretation of the entire Book of Revelation which revolves about this first personality. An outstanding and very intellectual minister years ago made the statement: "If you tell me your interpretation of the woman in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, then I'll tell you your interpretation of prophecy." At the time, I thought he was foolish, but I have come to agree with him. **I believe that the identification of this woman is the key to the understanding of the Book of Revelation.**

(J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, Revelation 12)

By searching and researching the scriptures, the woman in Revelation 12 is easy to identify. It is without a doubt the nation of Israel. Let's research the scriptural evidence:

Revelation 12:1 describes this woman: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; **a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:**" She is clothed with "the sun"; "the moon" under her feet and crown of "twelve stars". **Does this "unique" description sound familiar? It should if you've ever read Genesis chapter 37!**

Joseph has a "strange" dream in Genesis 37:

Genesis 37:9-10

9 And he [Joseph] dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, **behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.**

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

In Joseph's dream, Jacob (or Israel, Gen. 32:28) is the Sun, his wife Rachel is the Moon, the twelve sons or tribes of Israel (Joseph makes the twelve star in Genesis 37:9) are the Twelve Stars. We KNOW this because in verse 10, Israel rebuked Joseph for his dream, **"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"** The cross-reference from Genesis 37:9-10 to Revelation 12:1 is simply too obvious to ignore.

Several other details in Revelation 12 distinctly establish the "woman" is Israel.

12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. This "man child" can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:15, at the Second Coming of Christ, reads, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, **that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:** and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (see also Psalm 2:9, Rev. 2:27). Jesus Christ came forth from Israel: the seed of Abraham, Galatians 3:29 "And if ye be Christ's, **then ye Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise."

12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Israel "flees" into the wilderness in Exodus escaping from Pharaoh (a type of the antichrist) where the Lord fed Israel. According to Deuteronomy 32:9-10, the Lord found Jacob (Israel) in the "wilderness", "For the LORD'S portion is his people; **Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.**

10 He found him in a desert land, **and in the waste howling wilderness;** he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."

The "thousand two hundred and threescore days" equals three and a half years, the last half of the Great Tribulation period where the Lord God will have "a place prepared of God" for Israel.

12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

In Daniel 12:1, **Michael the archangel, is specifically designated as protector of Israel. "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel]: and there shall be a time of trouble"** (Daniel 12:1)

12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

If there was any doubt remaining as to the identify of the woman, Revelation 12:17 totally annihilates it. Revelation 12:17 LOUDLY assigns this woman to Israel. "The remnant of her seed (THE WOMAN) **which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. That could not possibly be ANYONE but Israel!**

The identify of the woman in Revelation 12 is the "KEY" that *unlocks* the prophecy of Revelation and also a "KEY" that *locks* the rapture of the church. This "KEY" provides more unmistakable testimony from the Word of God to the preeminence of Israel during the Tribulation and the absence of the "raptured" church. Because of the *extreme* importance of the identify of the WOMAN in Revelation 12, the following recognized Bible teachers reiterate the unmistakable identity of the woman in Revelation 12:

The "**woman**" associated with the "**sun**" (Jacob), "**moon**" (Rachel), and "**twelve stars**" (twelve sons of Jacob) **is Israel** (Gen. 37:9-10). Israel is taken "into the wilderness" for protection on eagles wings (vs. 6, 16 cf. Hos. 2:14-15, Deut. 32:9-11). Israel is the "**woman**" that "brings forth" Jesus Christ (vs 5 cf. Heb. 2:16; Gal. 3:16; Rom. 1:3) (*Ruckman Reference Bible*, Revelation 12:1)

The identifying marks of the woman are the sun, moon, and stars. These belong to Israel as seen in Joseph's dream. . . The career of the woman corresponds to that of Israel, for it is Israel that gave birth to Christ, who is the Child. . . **Therefore, we identify the woman as the nation Israel. No one woman who has ever lived, including the Virgin Mary, fits into this. It is the nation Israel and certainly not the church of all ages.** If we just keep our bearings here and not lose our heads, we know that this is the Great Tribulation Period and that the church has already gone to heaven.

(J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*)

The fact is, the "Woman" is neither the Virgin Mary or the Church. **She is ISRAEL.** We have only to be reminded of "Joseph's Dream," where he says--"Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the 'SUN' and the 'MOON' and the 'ELEVEN STARS' made Obeisance to me" (Gen. 37:9), to see the Jewish character of this "Woman." . . . **There can be no question but what the "Sun Clothed Woman" represents ISRAEL.**

(Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 90)

One point of prophetic revelation that it is essential to clarify in dealing with Israel in the tribulation is the identity of the "woman" in Revelation 12. . . it is important to identify this individual who occupies so important a place in the book. . . In Romans 9: 4-5 Paul writes concerning the Israelites, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9: 5). **Since the "man child" may be identified with certainty, and since the one bearing the man child is said to be Israel, the woman must be identified as Israel.**

(Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 285)

Israel is the woman who brought forth the man-child who is to rule with a rod of iron. Only of Israel could it be said the "she is clothed with the sun." "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings. . ." (Mal 4:2). Israel brought forth the Redeemer, The Church did not produce the Saviour (salvation is of the Jews-John 4:20). "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). Again, it is of Israel-and Israel alone-that it could be said, "He hath prepared for her a place in the wilderness". . .

There has never been any doubt in my mind that this woman is Israel.

(Oliver Greene, *Revelation Commentary*, p. 314)

The WOMAN of Revelation 12 clearly identifies Israel as THE major topic in the Great Tribulation and the major attack of Satan. The relationship of Israel and the Great Tribulation is too Great to ignore or hide. Let's briefly examine a few more instances of Israel in Revelation.

In Revelation 14 the 144,000 of Revelation chapter 7 reappears. Some commentators have doubted the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14 are the same. But the comparisons of Revelation 7 and 14 are too similar to overlook. For one, the number 144,000. These are the only two times this specific number appears in the King James Bibles. Secondly, the 144,000 in Revelation 7 are "sealed" in their foreheads. In Revelation 14, the 144,000 have their Father's name "written on their foreheads". Both are clearly Jews. Revelation 7 lists their Jewish tribes. In Revelation 14, they are on the Jewish phrase "mount Zion" in heaven. Again, we see the Jewish presence in the Tribulation.

I have no question in my own mind but that the 144,000 of this chapter are the very same as the sealed 144,000 of chapter 7.

(Harry Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, p. 73)

The 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, are the 144,000 "SEALED ONES," 12,000 from each Tribe of Israel, of chapter 7:3-8. There we are told they were sealed, here we are told why. In chapter seven we are told they were sealed in their foreheads, here we are told that that sealing was the writing on their foreheads of the name of the Lamb and of the Lamb's Father.

(Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 131)

Now, you have encountered these people before in Revelation 7:4-8, and it was very clear from the Scriptures that they were from the twelve tribes of Israel. That is, they were not "spiritual Jews." They were not the "circumcised in heart" (as in Rom. 2), they were not the "Israel of God" as in Galatians 6; they were not anything which heretics say they are in order to twist the word of God. **They are what they are—144,000 literal, physical Jews of the literal, physical twelve tribes of Israel!**

(Peter S. Ruckman, *Revelation Commentary*, p. 400)

Another clear testimony of the Jewish presence and influence during the Tribulation occurs in Revelation 15:3 as they singing the Jewish "song of Moses".

And they sing **the song of Moses** the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Two things are very evident from the scriptures during the Great Tribulation: One, the church is not there. Two, Jews and Israel are prominent during the Tribulation. To arrive at any other conclusion, one MUST ignore, change, distort, spiritualize, symbolize or just plain pervert the scriptures to read otherwise.

In conclusion of our examination of the rapture from the Word of God: We have CLEARLY found in the Word God the following evidence for the rapture:

1. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is CERTAIN. For every one verse on the first coming, there are at least eight verses on the Second Coming.
2. There are TWO DIFFERENT phases of the Second Coming. There is the Rapture of the church in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15. And there is the Second Advent of Jesus Christ in Rev. 19. These “two comings” can not possibly be the same event. There is not sane scriptural method to make them the same.
3. The Great Tribulation is the Wrath of a Holy God.
4. The Christians are promised deliverance from the Wrath of God.
5. The Church is mentioned 19 times in the Revelation chapters 2 -2, but not mentioned again until Revelation 22, AFTER the tribulation.
5. The Church, the Bride and Wife of Christ, is married to Christ in heaven and returns with Christ at the Second Advent in Revelation 19. If the Church “comes back” from heaven with Christ in Revelation 19, then the church MUST have “COME UP” before Revelation 19. We learned this occurred in Rev. 4
7. As we saw the removal of the church BEFORE the Tribulation, we saw the prominence of Israel during the Tribulation.

THE WAR ON THE RAPTURE

After searching and researching the Rapture from the Word of God, I am still “shocked” many Christians *openly* deny Rapture. They not only *openly* deny the Rapture. . . **They have declared war on the Rapture. . . And some vicious attack the “Blessed Hope”! Some Christians have seemingly made it their “ministry” to assault and annihilate Rapture.** Some of the most “obnoxious” folks I’ve encountered are the Rapture skeptics. They are hell-bent on destroying the “blessed hope”. Tim LaHaye in his book, appropriately named, *Rapture Under Attack*, addresses these “rabid-rapture skeptics:

Yet for some reason, this concept [the Rapture], which has brought so much hope and comfort to millions of Christians throughout church history **has been under savage attack** during the last sixty years by those who refuse to take prophecy as literally as they do other Scriptures, **Some of these attacks have taken the form of vicious personal attacks on those who held the position, other have used gross distortions in their vendetta against it.** Unfortunately, they have been amazingly successful in causing many innocent victims to abandon their expectation of rapture in their lifetime and in the process have not only stolen their hope but, in some cases, their zeal for service.
(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 12)

Before we conclude our study of the Rapture of the Church, let us examine some of the attacks on the rapture.

The missing “rapture”.

As we mentioned at the first of our rapture journey: one reason skeptics deny the rapture is the word ‘rapture’ is not in the Bible. This is the “laziest” and “lamest” excuse for attacking the rapture. Just because a “word” used to describe a “teaching” or “doctrine” isn’t in the Bible doesn’t mean the “teaching” is not there. For instance, the “words” – “trinity, missionary, millennium” are not in the Bible. But everyone knows these are sound Bible doctrines. We will repeat our previous information on the word “rapture”.

The Greek word for “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is harpazo, and it means “to seize” to “catch up” or “take by force”

harpazō (*har-pad'-zo*)

“to **seize** (in various applications): - catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force). (Strong’s Bible Concordance, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, “caught up”)

Ryrie’s Basic Theology explains our adaptation of the word “rapture”:

The Greek word from this term ‘rapture’ is derived appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, translated ‘caught up.’ The Latin translation of this verse used the word rapturo. The Greek word it translates is harpazo, which means to snatch or take away. Elsewhere it is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea (Acts 8:39) and to describe Paul’s experience of being caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-4). **Thus there can be no doubt that the word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to indicate the actual removal of people from earth to heaven.** (*Ryrie’s Basic Theology*)

The word “rapture” is actually a beautiful and perfect definition of the “catching up” ... “to meet the Lord in the air: and we shall ever be with the Lord.” The word “rapture” has two distinct meanings: 1) Caught up 2) ecstasy, extreme joy or pleasure,

RAPTURE, n. [L. raptus, rapio.]

1. Caught up. A seizing by violence.

2. Transport; ecstasy; violence of a pleasing passion; extreme joy or pleasure.

When the Lord “catches up” His children, it will indeed be “ecstasy, extreme joy or pleasure”!

The last trump...

And there’s the “last trump” assault. This rapture attack attempts to make the “last trump” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 the same as the last (the seventh) trump of Revelation 11. By making them the same, a Rapture before the tribulation, magically disappears.

We know from the Word of God during the Rapture a trumpet shall sound (1 Cor. 15:52); there is the trump of God (1 Thess. 4:16); and a trumpet talking to me (Rev. 4:14).

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, **and with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Revelation 4:1

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of **a trumpet talking with me**; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

In the book of the Revelation seven “trumpets” of judgment are recorded. Revelation chapters 8 and 9, detail the first two trumpets. Notice, judgment, death and destruction follow the first six trumpets.

Revelation 8:6-13

6 And the seven angels which had **the seven trumpets** prepared themselves to sound.

7 **The first angel sounded**, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 **And the second angel sounded**, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 **And the third angel sounded**, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 **And the fourth angel sounded**, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the

a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Revelation 9:1-21

1 **And the fifth angel sounded**, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

...

13 **And the sixth angel sounded**, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 **And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.**

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

The seventh trumpet is not sounded until Revelation 11. The seventh trumpet occurs after the dead bodies of the “two witnesses” are raptured up into heaven.

Revelation 11:9-18

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, **Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.**

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 **And the seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 **And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged**, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Some commentators teach that the seventh angel in Revelation 11:15 occurs at the middle of the tribulation. They base that timeline by teaching the book of Revelation runs chronologically with only one pass or view of the Tribulation. So they also teach a mid-tribulation rapture by using the same chronologically timeline. But as they say down south, “that dog hunt”.

Clearly after the seventh angel sounds in Revelation 11:15 begins the millennial reign (Revelation 20) of the Lord Jesus Christ: **“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign ever and ever.” There is no way theologically possible to make Revelation 11:15 ANYTHING but the millennial reign of Christ.**

Also, after the seventh angel sounds in Revelation 11, the judgment of the dead occurs which matches the judgment of the dead in Revelation 20.

15 **And the seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 **And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged**, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Revelation 20:4

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

We also know from Mathew 24, **AFTER the tribulation**, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Lord will “**send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet**”. Matthew 24 is plainly the same “trumpet” as Revelation 11. In both cases angel sounds the trumpet.

Matthew 24:29-31

29 Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 **And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven**: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 **And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Word of God *clearly* teaches a trumpet will sound at the Second Coming in Rev 11:15; Matt. 24:31 and a trumpet sound at the rapture in 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16. But are they “same” trumpet? Comparing the two trumpet events, obvious differences stand out.

The trumpet in Revelation 11 and Mathew 24, which are clearly the Second Coming of Christ, is specifically sounded angels.

Revelation 11:15

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Matthew 24:31

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

No angel sounds a trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 mentions the voice of the “archangel” (which not the “angel” of Revelation 11;15). But it is the Lord himself as the One with “the trump of God”, not an angel.

1 Corinthians 15:52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, **and with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

At the trumpet sound of Matthew 24, the Lord sends His angel to “gather together his elect from the four winds”. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the “raptured” are caught up in the clouds “to meet the Lord in the air”. Not one is gathered by an angel, but we “meet the Lord in the air”.

Matthew 24:31

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, **and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds**, from one end of heaven to the other.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

- 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, **to meet the Lord in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

A couple of other differences in the two trumpets. The trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 is a singular trumpet, the seven "trumpets" of Revelation are plural. The trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 occurs unexpected, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", while the trumpet of Revelation occurs in a sequence of prophesied and expected judgments. Obviously, the differences in the trumpets are both numerous and obvious.

But perhaps the most glaring difference between the seven trumpets of Revelation and the trumpet of 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4:16 is the purpose of the trumpets. The trumpets of Revelation herald judgment and the wrath of God. The trumpet of 1 Thessalonians 4 is deliverance and comfort. Notice, after the events in 1 Thessalonians 4, those wonderful words in verse 18: **"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."**

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

- 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 18 **Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

Reviewing the obvious differences in the trumpet of Revelation 11 and 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4. **You have ask yourself – how in the world does any one that can read English, honestly attempt to make them the same?**

And the answer is that little word "last". 1 Corinthians 15:52 reads, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound,..." They attempt to make the "last" trumpet of 1 Corinthians the "last" of the seven trumpets in Revelation. Dwight Pentecost "hits the nail on the head":

The argument rests on the use of the word *last* in connection with both events
 (Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 189)

But the word "last" doesn't necessarily mean the "last" forever. The word last can mean last "in time" or last "in a list or order". For instance, to say, "*he was the last in line*" doesn't mean he was the last in line *forever* or the last in *every line*, just that specific line or time. The "last trump" of 1 Corinthians 15:52 does not automatically mean it is the "last trump" of Revelation. It could also be the "last trump" of a specific time, such as the church age. As we previously read, comparing scripture with scripture, we know this is true.

Several verses in the Word of God also help us define and distinguish the use of the word "last". In John 6:39-40, the Lord uses the phrase "the last day" to refer to the "last day" at the resurrection.

John 6:39-40

- 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again **at the last day**.
 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up **at the last day**.

But in John 7:37, the "last day" refers to the "last day" of the feast. Clearly not the same "last day" as John 6:39-40.

John 7:37

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

Nehemiah 8:18 also gives another good example of the use of "the last day".

Nehemiah 8:18

Also day by day, from the first day unto **the last day**, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

Not only that, we know from the scriptures, that the "last day" of the resurrection in John 6 is NOT the last day for all eternity. More "days" are coming. Revelation 20:10 reads "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented **day and night** for ever and ever." Revelation 21:25 writes about New Jerusalem, for all eternity, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all **by day**..."

Revelation 20:10

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, **and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

Revelation 21:25

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Suffice to say, “hanging your hat” on the word “last” found in 1 Corinthians 15:52 in order to deny the rapture is a “foolish errand”.

The MacPherson-MacDonald-Malady.

One of the “ring-leaders” of the recent Rapture Attack is Dave MacPherson. In 1944, Dave’s father, Norman Spurgeon MacPherson, former pastor of First Baptist Church in New York, authored the book, *Triumph Through Tribulation*. Norman MacPherson’s book lists twenty arguments attacking the pre-tribulation rapture. Norman’s book was mainly an attack on Scofield and the Scofield Reference Bible. Norman MacPherson’s book accomplished “little to nothing” in refuting the rapture. In fact, most Christians have never heard of Norman MacPherson or his books.

But it lit a fire under his son. . . Dave MacPherson carried the banner declaring war on the rapture. But this time with a completely new weapon. And unfortunately, this one has been much more effective.

Dave (a news reporter from Kansas), in 1973 published *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin*. He got the title right, much like what MacPherson writes is that – *Unbelievable*. His first book picked up a few “rapture skeptics”. Several prophecy authors such as John Walvoord, Gerald Stanton, John Bray and Tim LaHaye to name a few, completely “annihilated” MacPherson’s “theory” (which we will describe shortly). Realizing his first book “bombed” and “doomed” for the “mark down” section at the local Thrift Store, MacPherson tried another “Unbelievable” trick. Riding the coattails of the best-selling *Late Great Planet Earth* (published in 1970) by Hal Lindsey, MacPherson republished his book in 1974 with the *catchy-copy-cat* title *The Late Great PreTrib Rapture*. Of course, it bombed too. Since then Macpherson has “repainted” and “reprinted” his Rapture-attack book several times - *The Late Great PreTrib Rapture* (1974); *The Incredible Cover-Up* (1980); *The Three Rs* (1998); *The Great Rapture Hoax* (1983); *The Rapture Plot* (1995). Of course, each “version” is a lie and IMPROVED. But they all are built on the same “theory”. And along the way, Dave has gathered quite a fan club. A Google search returns scores of web sites parroting MacPherson’s rapture-attack.

In a nutshell, (or shall we say from a nuthouse), MacPherson’s “Unbelievable-Late-Great-Rapture-Hoax-Incredible-Cover-Up-Plot” goes like this: (Buckle your seat belts and get some popcorn... As Ed Sullivan would say, “This is a ‘really good show’.”)

MacPherson claims the Pre-Tribulation “rapture” was NEVER told or taught or even known until the 1800s. It was born from a “vision” of a young “dangerously sick” (aka demon-possessed) girl named Margaret MacDonald in Scotland in the spring of 1830. Margaret was a member of Catholic Apostolic Church of Edward Irving, or Irvingites. The “Irvingites” merged parts of the Catholic teachings (Holy Communion, Baptism, etc.) with the Pentecostal-Apostolic gifts; visions, speaking in tongues, healing, et. al. In one of Margaret’s visions she “saw” the church “raptured” from the Great Tribulation. And *supposedly* in the 1830s, a well-known (*and well-respected*) British Bible teacher named John Darby got wind of a “new rapture revelation vision” from Margaret, and well, according to MacPherson. . . the rest is history. John Darby became the “founding Father” of the “dispensational-pre-trib-rapture” hoax conjured from the vision of a “demon-possessed” Scottish girl.

So.... the whole “Unbelievable-Late-Great-Rapture-Hoax-Incredible-Cover-Up-Plot” was nothing BUT the vision of a deluded, demon-possessed Scottish Lassie who deceived a Bible teacher named John Darby.

Being a newspaper reporter for many years, MacPherson’s books (at least the one I’ve read) have an “air of historical credibility” - but should be in the “fiction” shelves. No doubt, Dave can “tell a tale” and “spin a yarn.”

But as Tim LaHaye laments in *Rapture Under Attack*:

Unfortunately, they [Dave MacPherson] have been amazingly successful in causing many innocent victims to abandon their expectation of rapture in their lifetime and in the process have not only stolen their hope but, in some cases, their zeal for service.
(Tim LaHaye, *Rapture Under Attack*, p. 12)

The following FACTS blow up Dave’s “Unbelievable-Late-Great-Rapture-Hoax-Incredible-Cover-Up-Plot” FICTION. The FACTS have been documented and PROVEN by several authors.

Margaret McDonald's "vision" prophesying the "pre-trib-rapture" NEVER happened! Margaret did have a vision. But her vision was a rambling list of misquoted, misapplied and misinterpreted scriptures. No "rightly dividing the word" here. She has tribulation verses, church age verses, second advent verses, Israel-related verses, all "mashed" together into a "mystical-mess". She has the "church" in the Tribulation, then again at the Second Advent, then going up at the Second Advent and THEN Jesus "**descending from Heaven with a shout**". He is "descending" either AFTER or DURING the Tribulation – or BOTH - but not BEFORE the Tribulation. She prophesies the "trial of the Church is from Antichrist" - Tribulation. She throws scriptures without any "doctrinal" discernment! **Even Dave MacPherson admits Margaret is confused, "Margaret saw a SERIES of RAPTURES (and she was actually a partial rapturist, with or without the label)" (cited in Gerald Stanton, *Kept from the Hour*, p. 329)**

No one could HONESTLY say Margaret prophesied the "pre-tribulation" rapture. At best, she prophesied a "mid-post-tribulation rapture" – a "rapture" during and after the tribulation. But even that is a stretch. **So the WHOLE foundation of MacPherson's THEORY is FALSE. The "pre-trib-rapture-vision" NEVER happened!**

Since many people have been led astray by MacPherson's claims about Margaret MacDonald's vision, we have produced Margaret's complete "original" vision below. As the saying goes "the proof is in the pudding". And this pudding is a mess. We annotated her vision with brackets [] for scriptures references. We added notes for doctrinal application.

"It was first the awful state of the land that was pressed upon me. I saw the blindness and infatuation of the people to be very great. I felt the cry of Liberty just to be the hiss of the serpent, to drown them in perdition. It was just 'no God.' I repeated the words, **Now there is distress of nations, with perplexity, the seas and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear [Luke 21:16 - TRIBULATION].** Now look out for the sign of the Son of Man **[Matt 24:30 AFTER Tribulation - Second Advent]**. Here I was made to stop and cry out, O it is not known what the sign of the Son of Man is; the people of God think they are waiting, but they know not what it is. **I felt this needed to be revealed, and that there was great darkness and error about it; but suddenly what it was burst upon me with a glorious light. I saw it was just the Lord himself descending from Heaven with a shout, [1 Thess. 4:16 – RAPTURE]** just the glorified man, even Jesus; but that all must, as Stephen was, be filled with the Holy Ghost, that they might look up, and see the brightness of the Father's glory. I saw the error to be, that men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people. Many passages were revealed, in a light in which I had not before seen them. I repeated, 'Now is the kingdom of Heaven like unto ten virgins, who went forth to meet the Bridegroom, five wise and five foolish; they that were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them; but they that were wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.' **[Matt 25 – Israel – Second Advent]** But be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; and be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.' This was the oil the wise virgins took in their vessels – this is the light to be kept burning – the light of God – that we may discern that which cometh not with observation to the natural eye. Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his appearance. **[Not Scriptural – Second Advent – "every eye shall see him" Rev. 1:7].** No need to follow them who say, see here, or see there, for his day shall be as the lightning to those in whom the living Christ is. 'Tis Christ in us that will lift us up – **he is the light – 'tis only those that are alive in him that will be caught up to meet him in the air. [Partial Rapture – Not Scriptural]** I saw that we must be in the Spirit, that we might see spiritual things. John was in the Spirit, when he saw a throne set in Heaven. But I saw that the glory of the ministration of the Spirit had not been known. I repeated frequently, but the spiritual temple must and shall be reared, and the fullness of Christ be poured into his body, **and then shall we be caught up to meet him. [Another Rapture – Not in Scriptures]** Oh none will be counted worthy of this calling but his body, which is the church, and which must be a candlestick all of gold. I often said, Oh the glorious inbreaking of God which is now about to burst on this earth; Oh the glorious temple which is now about to be reared, the bride adorned for her husband; **[Rev 21:2 New Jerusalem – AFTER Second Advent and Millennial Reign]** and Oh what a holy, holy bride she must be, to be prepared for such a glorious bridegroom. I said, Now shall the people of God have to do with realities – now shall the glorious mystery of God in our nature be known – now shall it be known what it is for man to be glorified. I felt that the revelation of Jesus Christ had yet to be opened up – it is not knowledge about God that it contains, but it is an entering into God – I saw that there was a glorious breaking in of God to be. I felt as Elijah, surrounded with chariots of fire. I saw as it were, the spiritual temple reared, and the Head Stone brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace, unto it. It was a glorious light above the brightness of the sun that shone round about me. **[Acts 26:13 Paul on the Road Damascus]** I felt that those who were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and feel walking in the midst of them, while those who had not the Spirit could see nothing – so that two shall be in one bed, the one taken and the other left **[Luke 17:32 – SECOND ADVENT]**, because the one has the light of God within while the other cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven. I saw the people of God in an awfully dangerous situation, surrounded by nets and entanglements, about to be tried, and many about to be deceived and fall. **Now will THE WICKED be revealed, with all power and signs and lying wonders, so that if it were possible the very elect will be deceived [2 Thess. 2:8 AntiChrist – TRIBULATION] – This is the fiery trial which is to try us. – It will be for the purging and purifying of**

Every soul will be shaken to the very centre. The enemy will try to shake in every thing we have believed – but the trial of real faith will be found to honour and praise and glory. Nothing but what is of God will stand. The stony-ground hearers will be made manifest – the love of many will wax cold. **[Matt. 24:12 TRIBULATION]**

I frequently said that night, and often since, now shall the awful sight of a false Christ be seen on this earth, and nothing but the living Christ in us can detect this awful attempt of the enemy to deceive – for it is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness he will work **[2 Thess. 2:10 AntiChrist CHURCH IN TRIBULATION]**– he will have a counterpart for every part of God's truth, and an imitation for every work of the Spirit. **The Spirit must and will be poured out on the church, [CHURCH IN TRIBULATION]** that she may be purified and filled with God – and just in proportion as the Spirit of God works, so will he – when our Lord anoints men with power, so will he. This is particularly the nature of the trial, through which **those are to pass who will be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.** There will be outward trial too, but 'tis principally temptation. It is brought on by the outpouring of the Spirit, and will just increase in proportion as the Spirit is poured out. **The trial of the Church is from Antichrist.[TRIBULATION]** It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept. I frequently said, Oh be filled with the Spirit – have the light of God in you, that you may detect Satan – be full of eyes within -be clay in the hands of the potter - submit to be filled, filled with God. This will build the temple. It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. **This will fit us to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. [REV. 19:7 SECOND ADVENT AFTER THE TRIBULATION]** I saw it to be the will of God that all should be filled. But what hindered the real life of God from being received by his people, was their turning from Jesus, who is the way to the Father. They were not entering in by the door. For he is faithful who hath said, by me if any man enters in he shall find pasture. **[John 10:9]** They were bypassing the cross, through which every drop of the Spirit of God flows to us. All power that comes not through the blood of Christ is not of God. When I say, they are looking from the cross, I feel that there is much in it – they turn from the blood of the Lamb, by which we overcome, and in which our robes are washed and made white. **[Rev. 7:14 – TRIBULATION]** There are low views of God's holiness, and a ceasing to condemn sin in the flesh, and a looking from him who humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation. **[Phil. 2:7 CHRIST]** Oh! it is needed, much needed at present, a leading back to the cross. I saw that night, and often since, that there will be an outpouring of the Spirit on the body, such as has not been, a baptism of fire, **[Matt. 3:11]** that all the dross may be put away. Oh there must and will be such an indwelling of the living God as has not been – the servants of God sealed in their foreheads **[Rev. 7:3 144,000 JEWS in TRIBULATION]** – great conformity to Jesus – his holy image seen in his people – just the bride made comely by his comeliness put upon her. **This is what we are at present made to pray much for, that speedily we may all be made ready to meet our Lord in the air [1 Thess. 4:17 – RAPTURE]– and it will be. Jesus wants his bride.** His desire is toward us. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Amen and Amen Even so come Lord Jesus.” **[Rev. 22:20]**

Any honest person can CLEARLY see, just from our few annotations and comments, MacDonald's “vision” is a doo confusing rambling mess! MacPherson's “theory” that Darby read or heard of MacDonald's vision and then came up with the “pre-tribulation rapture” is just too funny for words. **Nobody reading that could come up with a pre-trib rapture**

John Walvoord states concerning MacDonald's “garbled view of prophecy”:

Margaret MacDonald, likewise, left behind no clear record that she ever held to a pretribulation Rapture. **It is possible from some of her statements to arrive at the conclusion that she was garbled in her view of prophecy and could possibly be identified with the partial rapture view. None of her statements, however, placed the Rapture before the Tribulation begins.** At best, it can be demonstrated that the Rapture would be included in the series of events that climax the Great Tribulation. (John Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, pp. 153-154)

ANOTHER FACT: John Darby did teach a pre-tribulation rapture. And yes, he was one of the first “modern” Bible teachers to teach a pre-trib rapture, but it was a clear, doctrinal teaching based upon the scripture, not MacDonald's rambling v

Darby strongly opposed MacDonald's visions (and the Irvingites) as Satanic influenced and inspired. There is no evidence that Darby ever considered the visions of God. **Darby wrote about the pre-tribulation rapture in January 1827. That was at least 3 years before MacDonald's infamous 1830 vision! Well, there goes the MacPherson “Unbelievable-Late Great-Rapture-Hoax-Incredible-Cover-Up-Plot” HOAX. . .**

John Walvoord, who has done extensive research in the MacDonald-MacPherson concoction writes:

The whole controversy as aroused by Dave MacPherson's claims has so little supporting evidence, despite his careful research, that one wonders how he can write his book with a straight face. **Pretribulationists should be indebted to Dave MacPherson for exposing the facts, namely, that there is no proof that MacDonald or Irving originated the pretribulation rapture teaching.**

Much more documentation and facts exposing MacPherson's delusions are found in John Walvoords books *The Blessing of Hope and the Tribulation* and *The Rapture Question*; Tim Lahaye's book *Rapture Under Attack* and several others.

Peter Ruckman provides a clear perspective to the "if it wasn't taught before Darby it can't be true" argument:

A book called "*The Origins of the Late Great Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory*" was circulated in the 1980's which was supposed to prove that the Pre-Tribulation rapture theory came from a cult of "Irvingites" in Great Britain through the prophesying of an erratic woman. The thinking behind the publication was "Since Calvin, Luther, Wesley, Whitfield, Augustine, Jerome, General Booth, Knox, Edwards, St. Francis, and B.B. Warfield never believed in a Pre-Tribulation rapture, it just cropped up from a Jesuit heresy". Quit a few suckers "bit" on the bait. . .

This type of thinking comes from watching TV while holding to tradition and refusing to study the Book. Calvin didn't believe the Jews would go back to Israel. Martin Luther didn't believe the Throne of David was on the earth. Jerome thought the land grant to Abraham was a spiritual blessing promised to Roman Catholics... **The idea that a Biblical truth can not be true because "nobody ever heard of it till so and so brought it up" is just too stale for storage.** Nobody but a fool would have stopped with the Biblical revelations that Origen had, or Augustine or Jerome or Luther or Calvin, . . .

"No one ever heard of a pre-tribulation rapture till..."

So *what?* . . .

John Wesley didn't believe in eternal security was in the Bible. So? John Calvin thought no man could receive Christ or obey God until after he was regenerate: So? Luther taught babies should be "christened." So? If the majority of expositors were Post-Millennial until 1850, what then? Was the Pre-Millennial revelation which God gave to Larkin, Bullinger Gaebeline, Scofield and Pember a "heresy"? (Peter S. Ruckman, *The Rapture*, pp. 9-10)

Even if MacPherson's cockeyed-theory was true. it would not alter the truth of the Word of God. What Darby, MacPherson, MacDonald or anyone, taught, believed, dreamed has zero bearing on the truth of the Word of God. Any honest person would have to admit, we have presented a viable Bible defense of the pre-tribulation rapture. Who cares what anyone writes and teaches, Our faith should be resting solely on the infallible Word of God. **The Word of God stands on its own. It stands alone against all critics and skeptics! Irregardless of it's critics – "God said it, and I believe it, and T SETTLES IT FOR ME!"**

I'll close our study of the rapture with the following personal event in my "defense of the rapture".

About 30 years ago, I received a phone call from a man that received some of my tracts. (We have informational tracts on the King James Bible, Different Versions, Rock Music, et, al. see www.av1611.org)

He said, "*I've read your tracts on the King James Bible. You've convinced me the King James Bible is the Word of God. But I disagree strongly about the rapture. I've done research on the rapture and it is a hoax. I would like to debate you on the rapture. I'm sure I can convince you it is heresy.*"

I politely replied, "*I don't do debates. And really wouldn't be interested.*"

He didn't take "No" for an answer...

Finally, I told him, "*Please send me any information and I'll be happy to read it. If you think you can convince me the rapture is a hoax, send me the info.*"

He never sent the documentation, but he kept calling wanting to debate. He was an obviously, well-read, intelligent and polite gentlemen. We had several interesting conversations. But he still wanted to personally "debate the rapture."

Finally after a few friendly conversations and prodding, I agreed to a pseudo-debate. I laid down the following ground rules:

- 1) We each would take 30 minutes to present our case. There would be no debating, just presenting the facts. After each presented their case, we would separate and go home.
- 2) **The only other ground rule;** the ONLY resource and authority would be the King James Bible. Our only input and interest would be "thus saith the Lord". No other books, resources or authors would be referenced or quoted.

We both agreed to the "rules". And we set the date and time.

I setup a small portable pulpit in my study, and waited...

When he arrived, he came with another gentleman with several armloads of various books! Between the two, they had at least 10 books!

I immediately pointed out, the rules were clear. Our ONLY source was the King James Bible. After a few sighs and “buts”, he reluctantly agreed to our original rules.

So I presented my case first. And for 30 *very fast* minutes, using only the King James Bible, I covered some of the material and verses in this book. I had to hurry to cover the material. When I finished, both men looked at each other and one of them quietly admitted, *“Wow! I have to admit that was very convincing!”*

Now it was the “rapture skeptic’s” turn to present his case. He jumped up to the small pulpit and literally after 3 or 4 minutes, he “ran out of gas”. He sadly confessed, without the “other” books and resources, he had no case. **He truthfully admitted, if his *only* resource was the Word of God, he could not honestly refute the rapture.**

Sadly, I never heard from the man again...

THE WARNING BEFORE THE RAPTURE

Friend, no doubt, Jesus Christ is coming back. The First Coming of Jesus Christ is the most proved and authenticated event in history! And for every one verse on the first coming, there are at least eight verses prophesying the Second Coming, Jesus Christ is coming back!

The Lord Jesus gave us many warning before His coming again.

And make no mistake, the “signs of the times” are here. Every day, the news media, the internet, the politics and the conditions – loudly proclaim Jesus is coming soon! Jesus Christ asked this question, “...can ye not discern the signs times?”

Matthew 16:3

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**

My friend, can you not discern the times?

Jesus Christ declares in Matthew 24:7 that when He comes again it will be “as the days of Noah”.

Matthew 24:37

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Genesis 6:11 describes the days of Noah as “the earth was filled with violence”:

Genesis 6:11

The earth also was corrupt before God, **and the earth was filled with violence.**

Violence and killings have “filled the earth”. The news media, over and over, testify to the violence, the killings, the shootings. Things that a few years ago were unheard of, are now daily, hourly, occurrences. The carnage and blood through our streets. Yes, Jesus is coming!

Jesus Christ also compares His coming again to the days of Lot.

Luke 17:28-30

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Genesis 19:24

Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

It would be impossible to deny the “days of Lot” in this generation. We have seen an explosion and acceptance of homosexuality – like never before! Same sex marriages, transgenders and even sex changes are flooding our TV shows and news. Even the children’s cartoon are propagated with homosexual characters. Clearly, Jesus is coming!

Another sure sign of the soon coming of Christ is the apostasy and falling away of the church and Christians. We are seeing Christians accepting same sex marriage, adultery, fornication and attacking the Word of Word.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, **except there come a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Make no mistake... Jesus Christ is coming soon!**The Rapture could happen literally at any moment! Are you ready to meet the Lord?**

Friend, the most valuable thing you own is your eternal soul. You do not want to miss the Rapture. And you do not want to die without Jesus Christ! Death is coming. . . It is getting closer literally every second.

Jesus Christ warned us in Mark 8:

Mark 8:36-37

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, **and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**

To die without the Lord Jesus will be the worse mistake you could make.

Revelation 20:15

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

If you have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour – do it RIGHT now!

It is simple to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

Realize you are a sinner.**Romans 3:10**

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”

Isaiah 64:6

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Realize that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins.**Revelation 1:5**

... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Romans 5:6-9

- 6 For when we were yet without strength, **in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**
- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
- 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 9 Much more then, **being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

Realize you can not save yourself.

There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Not our good works, baptism, church membership, sacraments – <https://www.av161> but Jesus Christ can save you!

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; **and that not of yourselves**: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Simply by faith receive Jesus Christ and trust His blood to save you.

John 1:12

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, **even to them that believe on his name**:

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, **that whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life.

If you have never been saved, pray this prayer, and mean it with all your heart.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and unless you save me I am lost forever. I thank you for dying for me at Calvary. I come to you now, Lord the best way I know how, and ask you to save me. I now receive you as my Savior. In Jesus Christ Name, Amen.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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Questions, Comments, Suggestions? [Please tell us. ...](#)